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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual session of 1998

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Part one

FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1998

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 26 to 28 and 30 January 1998

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Election of officers for 1998

1. The officers of the Executive Board for the year 1998 were elected as follows:

President: H.E. Mr. Michael John Powles (New Zealand)

Vice-Presidents: Mr. Sam Otuyelu (Nigeria)
H.E. Ms. Akmaral Kh. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan)
Mr. Fikret Mamedali Pashayev (Azerbaijan)
H.E. Dr. John William Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

B. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director

2. The President expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to the work of UNICEF. In addressing the organization's involvement in the reform process, he noted the importance of its internal management excellence process and the efforts being made to bring in new technologies. He was confident that together the secretariat and the Executive Board would be able to find solutions to the problems affecting the welfare of children.

3. In welcoming participants to the first Board session of 1998, the Executive Director extended special greetings to the new Board members: Antigua and Barbuda; Bangladesh; the Comoros; the Congo; Finland; France; Greece; Kazakhstan; the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; South Africa; the Sudan; Sweden; the United Kingdom; and Yemen.

4. The Executive Director's remarks focused on the "era of far-reaching transformation" into which UNICEF was now embarking. Through the United Nations reform process and the organization's own Management Excellence Programme, UNICEF had begun to coordinate its work more effectively with other parts of the United Nations system, and she cited several examples.

5. She said that UNICEF was aiming to be fully equipped and empowered to bring about the total realization of child rights for every child. To accomplish that, however, the organization needed to develop a strategic vision for the future that would not only help it to "chart a course into the twenty-first century", but would assist in "completing the still unfinished business of the twentieth". To that end, she announced the appointment of a special "futures" group charged with articulating key UNICEF principles, strategies and goals and laying the groundwork for a new agenda for children beyond the year 2000. In calling attention to the gains achieved in this fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she said that it was an occasion to reflect on the numerous human rights outrages against children and women.

6. In closing, she addressed the challenge of declining development assistance and extended special thanks to the Governments that had either increased or maintained their general resources contributions to UNICEF during the financial challenge that confronted UNICEF during 1996. She was confident that whatever the obstacles, UNICEF would continue to make a difference for children. (See E/ICEF/1998/CRP.2 for the full text of her statement.)

C. Adoption of the agenda

7. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1998/2, was adopted. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session

(a) Election of the officers of the Executive Board for 1998

(b) Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Item 4: Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA)

Item 5: Biennial support budget for 1998-1999, including the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Item 6: Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) work plan and proposed budget for 1998

Item 7: Oral report on the resource mobilization strategy

Item 8: Country notes

Item 9: Mid-term reviews (MTRs) and major evaluations of country programmes

Item 10: Oral report on implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors

Item 11: 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

Item 12: Other matters

Item 13: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

8. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 81 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session.

9. In addition, 2 United Nations bodies, 2 specialized agencies, 14 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 2 National Committees for UNICEF and Palestine had submitted credentials.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

10. The Executive Board had before it a report prepared by the secretariat, document E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I), which was introduced by the Executive Director and the Director, Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations. The Executive Director said that the purpose of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was to meet the needs of countries. UNDAF had already gone beyond its initial concept to include the specialized agencies, and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was looking at such issues as common premises and the resident coordinator system. The latter was increasingly a product of the United Nations system, with four resident coordinators drawn from UNICEF, an increase of three, and UNICEF was committed to strengthening the system. Given the level of interest in reform issues, she offered to arrange an informal meeting on the subject during the session.

11. The Director, United Nations Affairs and External Relations, responded to a number of issues related to UNDAF that had been raised by delegations at the pre-session information briefing on 16 January. He said that UNDAF would cover all areas of responsibility of the funds and programmes and that the specialized agencies and the World Bank were entering the process. The UNDAFs would highlight the strategies of each agency and clarify their strengths and individual mandates. The first pilot phase, involving 11 countries, would be completed in March 1998 and would feed into both the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the Council's special session in May on follow-up to the international conferences. As for country strategy notes (CSNs), they were in place in 30 countries, and under the guidance of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, new guidelines were being prepared. Country teams had been asked to undertake a critical review of the CSN process and to assess the need for a reorientation of the CSNs.

12. A number of delegations said that the report reflected both the commitment of UNICEF to, and its enthusiasm for, United Nations reform. Several speakers, however, said that report should have been more analytical and issue-oriented, and it was suggested that a format be developed through which the funds and programmes could seek common guidance from the Economic and Social Council. Because this would have to be done by the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, it might be an issue to be addressed by UNDG. It was also said that future reports should provide clearer guidance to the Council, and that consideration should be given to submitting a joint report on coordination to a future joint session of the UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA Executive Boards.

13. Delegations commented on the fact that the report did not cover coordination in humanitarian assistance, and one speaker specifically requested information on preventive measures. The secretariat replied that humanitarian assistance would be addressed in the Executive Director's annual report to the Board, to be presented at the annual session in June. UNICEF was a member of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and had been involved in the restructuring of the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. A delegation asked how UNICEF would be implementing the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Development" and said that the report should have touched on progress to date, as well as on any impediments to progress that the Economic and Social Council could address.

14. A number of delegations commented on the UNDAF process in general and on the role of UNICEF in particular. Some speakers stressed the importance of maintaining the unique role and mandate of UNICEF within that process, and it

was stressed that children should be a cross-cutting issue, together with gender and human rights. It was said that bilateral cooperation should be closely monitored and integrated with Governments' development programmes and that UNICEF had an important role to play in this regard. Another speaker said that reforms should be introduced gradually, after the role of the Government in the UNDAF process had been clarified. The secretariat said that there was no question about Governments' ownership of and leadership in the process. The role of the funds and programmes was to support Governments in implementing programmes and the outcome of international conferences.

15. Other speakers welcomed the close cooperation of UNICEF with the UNDAF exercise in the 11 pilot countries, with one of them expressing the hope that this would affect other countries in terms of close cooperation and integration at field level. A speaker requested that the Executive Board be kept informed of any problems encountered in the pilot countries. Another speaker said that UNDAF was progressing at different rates in different countries and that it would be interesting to know why. A delegation asked about the UNICEF strategy to input its positions into the reform measures.

16. In response to several comments about the inclusion of the specialized agencies in the UNDAF process, the secretariat said that country offices and resident coordinators in the pilot countries had been instructed to bring in the widest range of partners, including specialized agencies, bilateral agencies, donors and NGOs. UNDG had written to the specialized agencies about UNDAF, and both the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions were involved in the inter-agency mechanism. Asked about the relationship of UNICEF with the World Bank, the secretariat said that cooperation with the Bank, which had been detailed in the Executive Director's report in 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part I)), was continuing at an accelerated pace. UNDG and the World Bank had met late in 1997, and a meeting in January 1998 would address technical assessment and capacity-building. The first biannual meeting between UNICEF and the Bank would take place in February.

17. With regard to the relationship between CSNs and UNDAF, a speaker said that the decision of whether or not to prepare a CSN should be left in the hands of the programme countries. Another delegation said that CSNs should establish the parameters of United Nations operational activities for development and regretted that only a small number of countries were participating in the process. Hopefully the revised guidelines would increase the number of participating countries. However, another delegation said that the CSN could become irrelevant because of UNDAF. The secretariat said that the CSN had many benefits, including the provision of data and information needed by the United Nations. Ownership by Governments was critical to the success of the process.

18. Regarding follow-up to the international conferences, delegations asked about the role of UNICEF as the lead agency for the 20/20 Initiative and suggested that UNICEF provide input to the special session of the Economic and Social Council. Comments were also made about UNICEF follow-up to the 1996 World Food Summit and its involvement in the upcoming meeting on water being organized by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The secretariat said that UNICEF was taking part in the preparations for the "International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) + 5", which would include a round-table on 1 April on adolescent reproductive health.

19. Several delegations said that more resident coordinators should be chosen from UNICEF and from other funds and programmes. It was suggested that financing of the resident coordinator system be shared among the participating agencies. In addition, a speaker said that joint efforts by agencies, under the guidance of the resident coordinator, would make the best possible use of

resources, and stressed the importance of national execution, cooperation with the Government, clear-cut planning and distribution of financial resources. The speaker also suggested that her region, Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, be renamed "the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia".

20. Responding to questions about common premises, the secretariat stated that the process was moving quickly. One delegation stressed the importance of cost-effectiveness when making decisions on common premises and said that their establishment should affect programme implementation.

21. Delegations expressed concern about comments made by the Executive Director in her opening statement regarding difficulties in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. A delegation asked about the inclusion of the World Summit goals in the UNDAF process. Another delegation said that countries that would soon graduate from receiving UNICEF general resources would require special attention so that they would not see their progress for children reversed. The same speaker expressed support for efforts to rectify UNICEF maternal mortality statistics, especially in countries with good record-keeping and databases. The Executive Director said that reform was not an end in itself and that the quality of country programming must be paramount. In this context, UNICEF was continuing to work with all its partners on achieving the World Summit goals. UNDAF offered the possibility of getting partner agencies more involved in these efforts.

22. A delegation looked forward to the results of the upcoming first meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health because of the substantial field-level cooperation between the three agencies. A speaker asked about the possibility of receiving regular reports from the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and said that the relationship between UNICEF and UNAIDS needed to be developed. (See the annex, decision 1998/1, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

B. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Population Fund

23. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board opened the first joint meeting of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards. He noted that the idea of convening a joint meeting had been discussed for some two years, and was finally coming to fruition. In late 1997, the bureaux of the two Boards had agreed to hold a joint half-day meeting on the topic of reform in United Nations funds and programmes with a focus on the impact at the country level. The Viet Nam country team was invited to share their experience as a pilot country for UNDAF. The presentation would serve as a preliminary indication of the impact of reform at the country level. The respective Boards would continue to monitor the progress of reform in the future.

24. The Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam introduced the UNFPA Country Representative and the UNICEF Representative. He then gave a brief overview of the context in which the United Nations system was working in Viet Nam, concluding that while the UNDAF process was taking place in favourable circumstances, there were lessons to be learned for other countries. Eleven United Nations agencies were represented in Viet Nam.

25. A short film on the United Nations cooperation in Viet Nam was shown.

26. The Resident Coordinator stated that UNDAF was seen as a valuable tool to build consensus among the United Nations system and identify concrete joint activities. The formulation exercise had begun with a two-day retreat of the United Nations country team (with participation of the World Bank) in October 1997. Consensus was reached on the four focus areas for future United Nations system activities in Viet Nam. Besides the wishes expressed at the retreat to produce a good document, it was realised that the UNDAF formulation exercise was also a good team-building process. A mission statement for the United Nations system in Viet Nam was formulated, stating that the overall mission was to help Viet Nam in its fight against poverty through building capacities to design and carry out programmes that enlarged choices and opportunities for disadvantaged communities, families and individuals. A working group had been charged with facilitating the formulation process, supported by groups for each of the four focus areas.

27. The UNFPA Country Representative informed the Executive Boards of the major milestones in the process to develop UNDAF in Viet Nam. He noted that a total of 144 indicators had been identified in the provisional list, out of which 30-40 were selected as priorities. Issues papers were produced on follow-up to world conferences and integrated in UNDAF through the identification of common priorities. The first draft of UNDAF, scheduled to be ready in February 1998, would be subject to further discussions and then revised by the target date of April 1998. The process would take at least 26 weeks, longer than the 13 weeks indicated in the provisional guidelines. Several rounds of consultations were needed and there was a need for strong leadership to guide the process. Agencies with limited staff and resources had felt stretched by the process.

28. The UNICEF Representative spoke on current collaborative efforts of the United Nations system in Viet Nam. They included UNAIDS, a poverty eradication project in Ha Giang, a community development programme in Ky Son, the Basic Life Skills Education programme, and the Safe Motherhood Initiative. Tasks that lay ahead for the future included the identification of common priorities, delineating responsibilities among United Nations agencies, reinforcing the United Nations team spirit among staff, increasing programme coordination, strengthening advocacy, and collaborative resource mobilization.

29. The Resident Coordinator concluded the presentation with an overview of the lessons learned: in terms of operational aspects, the preparatory time was substantially longer than the 13 weeks indicated in the provisional guidelines; the use and timing of the use of facilitators should be decided upon by the country team at the very beginning of the process; consultancy services should be used selectively; the guidelines should be applied flexibly; additional human resources were required during the actual formulation phase; and reforms at programming level should be followed by operational reforms. He thanked the Government of Denmark for seconding a person to the Resident Coordinator's office to work with, among other things, the UNDAF formulation exercise. With regard to lessons learned in policy perspectives, he noted that partnership with the host Government was essential; that UNDAF must be seen in the proper perspective; that the issues of United Nations reform were not new; and that there was a delicate balance between the aim of increased cooperation while maintaining individual agency profiles. It was also noted that UNDAF might eventually replace some existing programming documents currently used, and that reform at the country level should be adequately accompanied by reform at the headquarters level.

30. The delegation of Viet Nam thanked the country team for sharing its experiences and reaffirmed that Viet Nam attaches great importance to the operational activities for development of the United Nations development system.

The speaker underlined that the lessons learned in the Viet Nam experience would be useful to other countries. He also emphasised the need for UNDG to ensure the distinctive identities of organizations. While supporting the objectives of UNDAF, he noted that UNDAF must be aimed at increasing the quality, efficiency of assistance to the developing countries and that in the process of drafting and finalizing UNDAF documents, the Government of the host countries should be fully consulted, its views fully taken into account and its development priorities fully respected.

31. Many delegations welcomed the joint meeting and expressed their gratitude for the presentations by the country team. The work at the country level was seen as another step forward in creating more effective and more efficient United Nations operations. Support for the Secretary-General's reform package was expressed. Speakers commented positively on the inclusion of the follow-up to global conferences in UNDAF. Many delegations urged that the lessons learned be incorporated in future UNDAF exercises. Several speakers supported the replacement of existing programming instruments with UNDAF. The broad participation of the United Nations system in the exercise was welcomed. The need for the Bretton Woods institutions to participate in the UNDAF process was emphasized. Some speakers referred to the issue of including bilateral donors or the private sector at a later stage. Another speaker emphasised the need for the United Nations House to be established wherever possible. More ideas would be put forward during the triennial policy review of operational activities.

32. Some speakers expressed concern about the length of the UNDAF process and the extra time and resources required and asked whether any steps had been taken by the United Nations to accelerate the process in other countries. One speaker noted that the secondment of government personnel to work on UNDAF matters should not lead to a situation similar to that in the United Nations peace-keeping operations, where government personnel had been assigned to core functions on non-reimbursable loans. He also requested information on whether joint resource mobilization would result in an increase to core resources. Queries were raised regarding how UNDAF would accelerate capacity-building in Viet Nam, how the United Nations country team planned to harmonise or unify programmes under UNDAF, and on which agencies were involved in the exercise in the 19 pilot countries. Information was requested on how UNDAF would facilitate joint efforts in the programme approach in dealing with problems, whether there was parallel financing for joint action, on how progress and benefits would be measured, and what would happen to the parts of the programme that did not fit into UNDAF.

33. Several speakers favoured the convening of joint meetings of the two Boards on a regular basis in the future. One speaker requested the Bureau to develop proposals for future joint meetings linked to matters such as the common country assessment (CCA).

34. The Resident Coordinator stated that UNDAF benefited from the direct involvement of the Government. He noted that the guidelines were still provisional and that one issue to revisit might be how to associate Governments more closely with the exercise. If other programming instruments were superseded by UNDAF, then the Government would have to sign the document. He emphasised that representatives of specialized agencies in Viet Nam were very keen to participate in the exercise. Mobilization of international NGOs and bilateral donors to participate in the exercise was foreseen.

35. The Country Representative of UNFPA stated that he expected that the costs would be reduced as the process progressed. He added that the team strongly supported national execution and the sector approach, as well as working with

the international financial institutions, the specialised agencies, and the major bilateral agencies.

36. The UNICEF Representative explained that agencies participating in the process were maintaining their profiles.

37. The Resident Coordinator underlined that the support of countries active in Viet Nam was needed, noting that 25 of the countries represented on the two Boards were present in the country. The capitals needed to support the programme approach in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure coordination and quality participation.

38. Following the presentation by the Viet Nam team and comments by delegations, the Executive Heads of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA made statements. All three underlined the importance of this first joint session of the two Executive Boards and of the progress made to date with UNDAF as exemplified by the United Nations team in Viet Nam.

39. The UNDP Administrator, who also is the Chair of UNDG, said that UNDAF, which is at the heart of the Secretary-General's reforms, is marked by a shift from information-sharing between funds and programmes to generalised, goal-oriented collaboration at country level. Without national support, however, UNDAF would not work, and it had to build on and reflect national development priorities. Key to the process was the ability of the resident coordinator system to draw on the mandates of all agencies; staff in a country must be responsible not just for their own agencies' work, but for that of the United Nations system as a whole in that country. At headquarters, UNDG had established a global support system with trained facilitators and global support personnel.

40. All specialised agencies had been invited to participate in UNDAF, and a review to be undertaken in Mali and Viet Nam would compare UNDAF with the World Bank's country assessment exercise. He thanked a number of Governments for their financial support to UNDAF, including those of Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

41. Responding to questions about what current programming arrangements could possibly be replaced by UNDAF, he suggested the UNDP Advisory Note, which is used as a basic for programme formulation with Governments. Full incorporation of global conference action points would be a hallmark of a successful UNDAF.

42. The Administrator outlined the activities of the United Nations development team over the past year. For example, both UNDG and the Executive Committee had been established and met monthly. UNDG had provided guidance to resident coordinators on the follow-up to international conferences. Both UNICEF and UNFPA had seconded staff to the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), and the World Food Programme was expected to do so shortly. Finally, the Director of UNDGO and the inter-agency subgroup on common premises and services were responsible for accelerating progress in identifying 50 countries that could host a United Nations House.

43. He also described a number of steps that had been taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system, in consultation and collaboration with UNDG members. These included improved selection procedures; a new, competency-based assessment; and a separate performance evaluation of current resident coordinators, in which all UNDG members and specialised agencies were participating. General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 had begun the process of going beyond UNDP for resident coordinators; in 1992, only one resident coordinator had come from outside UNDP, but 30 per cent of those recommended most recently were from other funds and programmes. He had

instructed all resident coordinators to represent all United Nations agencies evenhandedly, to keep their roles as UNDP resident representative and resident coordinator separate, and to resolve any conflicts between the two in favour of the system as a whole. In addition, extra resources would be made available for implementing new procedures for the resident coordinators' annual reports.

44. The UNICEF Executive Director said that the joint session demonstrated that United Nations reform was real and that it was being mainstreamed. The presentation by the Viet Nam country team had shown the excellent quality of the staff working in all the funds and programmes in Viet Nam, and reflected honestly the strengths, potential and challenges of UNDAF. Field-level coordination had not begun with UNDAF, which was a work in progress, and there was always room for improvement. Resource implications - both human and financial - had to be considered. It was very early in the process, and while the UNDAF process had to move along, it was too soon for any evaluation. In developing UNDAF, it was important to ensure wide participation by the funds, programmes and agencies and by government partners.

45. Concerning coordination issues, she said that UNICEF was a member of both UNDG and ECHA. There had been a lot of progress in the last year. The challenges of coordination at headquarters were complex because of the different needs of the field-based agencies and the more centralized Secretariat departments. Two areas where this was evident were procurement and information technology. For example, the United Nations would most likely be best served through a common framework for procurement rather than a single service entity; this could result in significant savings in terms of efficiency. Many improvements in operations could be achieved with existing rules and regulations, not all of which needed to be changed.

46. The resident coordinator system was moving towards genuine, system-wide representation, and UNICEF would participate fully in the appraisal process, she said. One issue requiring further exploration was that of other agencies' representatives assuming the responsibilities of resident coordinator where it would remain a combined function.

47. In closing, she said that a thorough evaluation of UNDAF would be required to ensure that it provided "added value", although she was sure this would be the case.

48. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration), UNFPA, spoke on behalf of the UNFPA Executive Director, who was unable to attend the session. He expressed full support for the reform initiatives and said that while the UNDAF pilot phase was still ongoing, a number of points should be noted. Overall, the experience was relatively positive and there was government support. UNDAF was useful for team-building and for its participatory process, but the exercise was time-consuming and resource-intensive, which had implications for agencies with limited staff, including UNFPA. UNDAF would lead to stronger country programmes, and this would need to be reflected in internal staff performance appraisals. Finally, overall coordination processes had to be streamlined, so that each agency might have to examine its existing programme requirements and procedures.

49. For there to be successful implementation of UNDAF, there must be an understanding by the resident coordinator of his/her role, as well as the commitment of all participating organizations, a participatory approach and a response to countries' needs and priorities. It would mean maximizing the comparative advantage of the United Nations system, and respect for the mandate of each organization and for cross-cutting issues such as population and gender. There must be ownership of the process by the country team; involvement of the

national authorities, including NGOs; and wide international participation, including United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. The process must also pay attention to issues of international coordination for follow-up to international conferences. In this regard, the UNDAF exercise should take into account the data and other materials, including guidelines, prepared by the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for all, chaired by the Executive Director, UNFPA.

50. UNFPA was an active member of UNDG and had seconded senior staff to UNDGO, he said. UNFPA supported the resident coordinators as representatives of the Secretary-General, and the resident coordinators must be strong and impartial advocates of all agencies.

51. A delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the establishment of UNDG was obviously intended to maintain and reinforce the distinctive identities of the participating agencies, while encouraging coordination and integration at headquarters and in the field. However, the members of the group, as the main recipients of development cooperation, were primarily concerned with the quality, efficiency and volume of assistance rather than with institutional arrangements. Simplicity of programme delivery was important, but they did not see any merit in pursuing integration as an end in itself. As for UNDAF, it might be premature to assess its successes and failures. In drawing on the lessons of the pilot projects, it would be important to take into account the views of the recipient Governments. In discussing the reform proposals, the group of countries had earlier addressed the question of counterpart arrangement of UNDAF at country level and the mechanism for the presentation of credentials of the resident coordinator to the host Government. Therefore, the implementation of the reform should take into account the specific needs of each region and country. Finally, the Secretary-General had been requested to propose a new system of core resources, and any proposal in that regard should not increase or add any new burden to the developing countries, nor incur conditionality.

52. Delegations commented on the UNDAF process, with one suggesting that UNDAF was not an end in itself, but should be in line with the agencies' management improvement exercises and avoid duplication and overlap. Addressing the issue of costs, a speaker said that the purpose of the pilot phase was to identify best practices; with higher cost-efficiency as an objective, the initial investment might pay off.

53. Some speakers welcomed the work towards collaborative programmes and greater coordination, but questions were raised about the relationship between the different instruments of field-level coordination - the CSN, UNDAF and the strategic framework - and about the role UNDG could play in harmonizing these field-level mechanisms. A delegation said that UNDAF was already changing the programming process in the field and that the field should push headquarters in this regard. A speaker asked about the relationship between the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, and about the type of cooperation being undertaken with the World Bank. Another speaker cited such challenges as the difficulty of reconciling programme objectives; the lack of indicators for all priorities; different guidance from headquarters from each agency; and the weak interest of the Bretton Woods institutions. A delegation stressed the importance of including the specialized agencies and bilateral donors. Another delegation said that Viet Nam was an ideal case for UNDAF, but other countries were less ideal, and there was a need for flexibility in the field.

54. It was said that according to the provisional guidelines, only the United Nations country team would approve UNDAF, but the Government also should approve

any assistance framework. It was asked if there would be a need for a special cooperation agreement with Governments, and what would be the terms of reference and responsibility of Governments in the UNDAF process. The guidelines' references to consultation with NGOs and donors required elaboration, and the wording on common services and the division of labour between agencies was open to interpretation, according to some. (It was asked to what extent UNDAF could be linked to the common services exercise, and if there should be contemplation of administrative integration at the headquarters level.)

55. A number of speakers addressed the role of the Executive Boards and/or the issue of future joint sessions. One speaker said that UNDAF required the exchange of information between the Executive Boards, including the possible harmonisation of their programmes of work. He suggested that UNDAF and the pilot projects be discussed at a special inter-sessional meeting of the Executive Boards. Another delegation said that the choice of UNDAF for this session was logical, although other topics would also be appropriate. It was asked if from now on, there would be regular joint briefings on the state of UNDAF.

56. The representative of UNAIDS said that hers was unique among the "theme group" agencies because it was able to provide some catalytic resources and had learned a lot in the process. This had been the case in Viet Nam. There must be consistency between the positions of headquarters and the field, and there was a need for some shared resources to move the process from dialogue to programming.

57. In summing up, the resident coordinator in Viet Nam said that UNDAF should be country- and field-driven. It was too early for evaluations, and the country teams would advise when they were ready. His team was happy to work with other country teams and would do so once its first document had been produced. UNDAF would be open to Governments, donors, NGOs and civil society, or it would not exist. It must be actively open to bilateral agencies. The guidelines were not yet final, and teams would continue to communicate their views to headquarters. This must be an open process.

58. The President of the UNICEF Executive Board said that the session had provided much food for thought for both Executive Boards and for the Economic and Social Council.

C. Biennial support budget for 1998-1999

59. The Comptroller presented the UNICEF biennial support budget for 1998-1999, the first to be presented to the Executive Board in the harmonized format, as approved at the first regular session in January 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1, decision 1997/5). The Board deliberations were based on the following documents:

(a) Biennial support budget for 1998-1999 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.1 and Corr.1);

(b) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.2);

(c) Estimated distribution of programme and support budgets, 1998-1999 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.4).

60. UNICEF used the integrated budgeting approach, as approved by the Board in decision 1997/3. The process was open, participatory and transparent, and linked the country programme management plan to a decentralized programme and

budget review. Document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.4, which was not part of the harmonization exercise, was prepared to provide a summary by country of the distribution of posts and resources for the programme and support budgets.

61. The Comptroller provided an overview of key figures in the 1998-1999 support budget. The 1996 medium-term plan (MTP) projections of 1998-1999 general resources income had been adjusted downward by $82 million in 1997 due primarily to the strengthening of the United States dollar. In the proposed no growth support budget, UNICEF had achieved substantial savings in order to absorb new support budgets for 25 country offices, mandatory cost increases and investments to finalize three new information technology systems. As a result of these savings, the Comptroller demonstrated that $33 million would be redirected to programme activities. All member countries expressed support for the 1998-1999 support budget proposal.

62. During the pre-Board and intersessional meetings, several delegations had requested the secretariat to respond to the report of the Advisory Committee on the support budget for 1998-1999 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.2). The Deputy Executive Director, in her introduction to the 1998-1999 support budget, took the opportunity to respond to those requests. She thanked the Advisory Committee for its thorough report and valuable comments, and presented her analysis of the report, with several proposals for future improvements in reporting.

63. The comments on the budget format fell in two main categories: those which UNICEF could improve alone; and those which UNICEF would need to coordinate with UNDP and UNFPA. In order to maintain consistency, all comments would be reviewed and coordinated at the working level in the three secretariats. Future proposals for changes to the harmonised budget format would be submitted to the Board, through the Advisory Committee, in time to be included in the next biennium budget.

64. One major concern expressed by the Advisory Committee, and shared by UNICEF and Board members, was the projected income level of regular resources. The Deputy Executive Director referred to the resource mobilization oral report, scheduled to be presented report at the present session (see paras. 86-105 below). Facing a situation of declining resources, the Deputy Executive Director could assure that UNICEF would maintain its commitment to maximizing direct programme resources and the effective management of country offices. If resources should decline, support costs would be reduced. She offered to give a progress report on the share of the support budget to total resources at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 1999.

65. Board members and the Advisory Committee had suggested that the annual GCO budget be included in future biennial support budgets. The Deputy Executive Director explained that it was in the best interest of the commercial operations of GCO to maintain the annual cycle of budgets and work plans. She proposed to improve information on GCO in the support budget document by adding an annex to the next biennium budget submission.

66. Responding to an Advisory Committee request for a comprehensive "office automation" strategy, the Deputy Executive Director offered to submit, through the Advisory Committee, a progress report on the UNICEF strategy and investments in information technology. The proposed report would build on the tradition of previous communications with the Board during regular Board sessions and intersessional meetings.

67. All delegations addressing this agenda item welcomed the efforts made during the harmonization process and the intersessional meetings in achieving a decentralized and transparent budgeting process. However, many of them

expressed the view that the new common format for UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA support budgets was still difficult to understand. Some delegations requested that future budget documents include more analysis of income projections and other key budget components.

68. The proposed support budget was considered balanced by some delegations, while others had anticipated a decrease in some administrative elements after streamlining of operations. Some speakers questioned the increase from 24.4 to 26.1 per cent of the support budget to total resources. The Comptroller explained the importance of having achieved a no growth support budget. The income estimates were set conservatively by the secretariat, thus contributing to the proposed increase in percentage.

69. Continuing the discussion of support budget percentages, some delegations referred to document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.4. They welcomed the information provided and questioned why the support budget in some countries seemed to be very high compared to the programme budget. One delegation requested the secretariat to analyse this situation and to consider applying lessons learned from a multi-country approach. The Comptroller explained the underlying principles of the document. First, general resources for programme activities were allocated to countries by a common formula, as approved by the Board. Supplementary funds were made available by donors. Secondly, support budget levels were calculated during the integrated budgeting process to support the planned programme activities. Fixed costs in a country office, such as local salaries or rental agreements, varied tremendously. Therefore, the United States dollar equivalent should not be taken as a direct measure of the size or capacity of a country office.

70. Referring to management and administration costs, some delegations supported more streamlining of New York headquarters to shift emphasis to the field. Some speakers requested more details about the actual transfer of fundamental tasks to countries, while others asked for more details on actual efficiency gains in operations. Still other speakers expressed concern as to whether there was sufficient flexibility in planned activities, or other means of controlling costs, if the planned level of general resources was not achieved.

71. The reduction of posts in the 1998-1999 biennium was discussed. Some delegations expressed confidence that UNICEF would continue to handle these cases in the most humane manner. Other delegations wondered whether UNICEF would be able to maintain an equitable geographical representation of staff in the organization, and requested reports on the justification of all proposed post reductions. The Deputy Executive Director replied that, when posts were to be abolished, the starting point would always be an analysis of the needs of the offices and the country programmes. Changes in needs, combined with financial constraints, were justifications for post reductions.

72. The nature and management of support budget savings were also discussed. Delegations asked whether support budget savings would be redirected to programme activities in the same country. The Comptroller responded that general resources savings would revert back to the total general resources income and would then be used for programmes of cooperation according to the general formula.

73. Some delegations questioned the general formula for calculating the distribution of UNICEF general resources. They were concerned that some regions, with the world's largest populations of children, would receive less general resources in the coming biennium. In their opinion, the general formula was responsible for a delay in adjusting resource allocations to the neediest.

The Deputy Executive Director replied that the formula had indeed been reassessed to give more emphasis to least developed countries and sub-Saharan Africa as of 1 January 1999.

74. Several delegations asked whether a procedure for recovering the costs of refunding staff members for income taxes levied by Member States had been decided and accepted by the concerned Member States. The Deputy Executive Director responded that joint negotiations would involve all agencies, and no contacts had yet been made.

75. The gap between UNICEF commitments and challenges was addressed by a number of speakers. They concluded that it would be impossible to achieve the World Summit goals in the present environment of declining resources and urged Member States to take full responsibility when approving the biennial support budget. In their opinion, member countries should take more responsibility to mobilize the necessary resources. (See the annex, decisions 1998/2, 1998/3 and 1998/4, for the texts of the decisions adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for 1998

76. The Executive Board had before it the GCO work plan and proposed budget for 1998 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3 and Corr.1).

77. The report was introduced by the Director, GCO, who also presented the highlights of GCO performance and the changes that took place in 1997 in the area of new marketing and fund-raising initiatives. These included the harmonization of the product line; shortening of the time to market; revamped brochure; increased focus on key markets and new corporate partnerships, including sales and licensing agreements with Caran D'Ache and Flik-Flak (a children's watch manufacturer and a subsidiary of Swatch); and impressive results from the alliance with ITT Sheraton Hotels, "Check Out for Children".

78. Proposed changes for 1998, including a new organizational structure with a headquarters in New York, and regional offices in New York and Geneva, and regional support centres in Santa Fé de Bogotá and Singapore, were also highlighted. The new structure was based on integrated brand management linking private sector fund-raising and products. Other proposed changes included the introduction of new work processes and a new name for GCO - the UNICEF Private Sector Division.

79. Some speakers recommended that the GCO budget be integrated into the biennial UNICEF budget. The Deputy Executive Director said that the issue of integrating the GCO budget into the biennial budget had been discussed by the Executive Board previously and it had been agreed that they should be kept separate for several reasons. First, GCO was a continuous business operation. Secondly, GCO provided not just a budget, but also a business plan which included revenue projections and expenditure estimates that were entirely different from the UNICEF budget. The main objective of GCO was to maximise income for UNICEF by increasing revenues and minimizing costs, while considering market opportunities, competitive practices, sourcing possibilities and other external factors such as inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, etc. For this reason, the special GCO Supplement to the UNICEF Financial Regulations and Rules was established. Thirdly, the GCO budget had to be reviewed annually, whereas the budget for the rest of UNICEF was reviewed on a biennial basis. Therefore, the Deputy Executive Director urged the Executive Board to maintain a separate review of the GCO work plan and budget and agreed to include, in an annex to the UNICEF biennial budget, an update on the current GCO income and expenditures.

80. Several delegations requested additional analyses to be included in the GCO work plan and budget document which would allow performance monitoring of its two income-generating activities - private sector fund-raising and product sales. The Director, GCO, explained the integrated brand management approach, which was the reason for presenting a consolidated statement for marketing, but also agreed to provide analyses as requested in the future.

81. Several delegations questioned the source and basis of the sales forecasts reflected in the GCO MTP. Some of them considered the projections overly optimistic, especially taking into consideration the impact of exchange rate fluctuations and the planned conversion of European currencies to the "Euro". The Director, GCO, explained that the sales partners were the primary source of these forecasts. GCO obtained sales results from partners only after lengthy delay and often well after reports were needed to prepare the Board documents. In response to queries from one delegation, the Director, GCO, agreed to revise the MTP to better reflect the existing trends between expenditures and proceeds from product sales for the years 2000 and beyond. A corrigendum reflecting changes to table 7 of E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3 was issued.

82. Many delegations expressed disappointment that the GCO headquarters office was not relocating to Europe closer to its main markets. The Executive Director and the Director, GCO, explained the reasons for maintaining the headquarters in New York. Despite generous offers received from two Member States, a cost-benefit analysis did not provide any sound financial justification for such a move. In addition, there was no business justification for the move in view of the fact that (a) the division was experiencing a high vacancy factor in key posts; (b) there were major structural and business process changes to be implemented; and (c) several key staff members were involved full-time in the implementation of the new UNICEF financial system. GCO would have impaired its capacity to service its partners in the short term, with a possible loss of income, which was undesirable in a climate of diminishing UNICEF income. The Executive Director added that although a move to Europe was implicit in the recommendation in the Coopers and Lybrand review of GCO, it was not a key recommendation, and they had given no strong analytical justification for such a move.

83. Several delegations said that the GCO name should properly reflect its diversified activities.

84. Some delegations requested further clarification on the brand management approach. The Director, GCO, explained that fund-raising, greeting cards and events were all part of the same equation, using the same resources, and that all were a means of bringing the UNICEF name to the donor/consumer. It was important for GCO to employ staff who could translate the strength of the UNICEF brand into concrete resource mobilization strategies.

85. Two delegations expressed concern that the number of products had been reduced and that the focus on "key markets" would be at the expense of smaller markets. The Director, GCO, explained that the focus on key markets was one of the main Coopers and Lybrand recommendations aimed at enabling the division to use its scarce resources optimally. However, he stressed that smaller markets would not be neglected. (See the annex, decision 1998/5, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Oral report on the resource mobilization strategy

86. As requested by the Executive Board at its third regular session in September 1997 during consideration of the programme of work for 1998 (decision 1997/30), the Executive Director presented an oral report on the resource

mobilization strategy. She described recent declining trends in official development assistance (ODA) as well as similar trends for UNICEF general resources and supplementary funds income. At the outset she underlined her concern about the negative impact this would have on the ability of UNICEF to carry out its mission and mandate to promote and achieve the rights and goals for children.

87. As an extraordinary measure, the Executive Director had convened a special team to review the organization's resource mobilization efforts, define priorities for attention and make recommendations with respect to reversing these trends. Its work, she said, would contribute to the preparation of a report on the subject to be presented to the Executive Board at its upcoming annual session in June.

88. Key issues that would form the basis of the review and analysis would include: (a) the distinctive characteristics and approaches implied by core versus supplementary funding, the latter forming part of Board-approved country programmes; (b) private sector potential; (c) rationalizing and refocusing efforts of the Private Sector Division (formerly GCO); (d) the variability in the relative share of ODA channelled through UNICEF from respective members; (e) financial ramifications of expanded partnerships with international financial institutions; (f) support from programme countries and advocacy by programme countries with donors; and (g) improved contribution management.

89. The Executive Director requested the Board to assist UNICEF in its review by providing feedback and suggestions to the secretariat on several issues, including: (a) how to refocus donors' attention on the importance of resources in meeting the commitments of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit for Children goals; (b) the impact of United Nations reform on resource mobilization; (c) new approaches for canvassing Governments and the private sector; (d) whether this was the time to pursue multi-year funding for core resources more vigorously; (e) whether accepting resources from international financial institutions would challenge the character of UNICEF; and (f) whether there were systemic obstacles within UNICEF which limit its resource mobilization capacity.

90. The discussion which followed responded specifically to a number of the questions posed. However, several delegations expressed the need to consult with their capitals and to revert to the issue at a later stage.

91. Many of the speakers addressing this agenda item welcomed the Executive Director's remarks and the creation of the special team on resource mobilization. Several of them expressed an interest in receiving more information on the terms of reference and progress of the team's work. Almost all of the speakers looked forward to continuing the dialogue through intersessional meetings and again at the annual session.

92. At the heart of the discussion on multi-year funding was concern for a predictable resource base to allow for responsible delivery of the UNICEF mandate. Although the notion of multi-year funding received strong support from a number of delegations, two other speakers said that in budgetary terms, their Governments did not have the flexibility to pledge beyond one year into the future. Options which included various combinations of assessed funding, negotiated pledges and voluntary funds were raised, but it was felt that they should be referred to other forums such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for in-depth review as both would be dealing with these issues on a system-wide basis. In addition, the secretariat was urged to consult regularly with the newly established UNDP/UNFPA open-ended working group charged with examining the same issues.

93. All of the speakers commenting on United Nations reform referred to its possible impact on resource mobilization. One speaker felt that UNICEF in particular should be vigilant in monitoring the perceived impact of the reforms, while two other speakers expressed the hope that there would be no negative impact. While a coordinated response to resource mobilization in all funds and programmes was called for by a number of delegations, it was acknowledged by one speaker that the same strategy would not necessarily work effectively for all agencies.

94. The importance of international financial institutions as partners and/or funding sources for UNICEF was stressed by some speakers. At the same time, they all cautioned UNICEF to respect its policies and approved programming frameworks in favour of meeting children's unmet needs. Several delegations felt that this subject should be dealt with at a later date, with one noting that it would also be discussed by the Economic and Social Council in April.

95. UNICEF was urged to explore additional funding/collaboration with the European Union, and it was felt that this issue should be revisited at the annual session.

96. While speakers acknowledged the potential for additional income from the private sector, opinions varied about the role and positioning of private sector income for UNICEF. Several delegations stressed that UNICEF was a "Government-owned" organization and that it was the responsibility of Member States to ensure its financial survival. However, one speaker cautioned that private sector funding could imply risks also with regard to conditionality.

97. The triangular sharing of financial responsibility between Governments, National Committees and civil society, as well as the potential for positive leverage between the three, were highlighted by several speakers. One of them advocated strongly that even private sector contributions should be closely and accountably linked to specific programmes and expenditures.

98. A number of important suggestions were made concerning the strategy of determining which message would ultimately influence Government resource allocations, including: (a) information on the results or impact of programme interventions was a more powerful argument than information on needs alone; the "needs" argument was no longer satisfactory; (b) stressing that the goals and targets - whether for the World Summit for Children or the Development Assistance Committee - were still valid; and (c) demonstrating whether UNICEF in particular could make a measurable difference in the situation of children. One speaker summed up the ideas expressed by stating that what was needed was a "technical breakthrough" in translating and transmitting information on UNICEF programmes in the field.

99. Combined with the technical aspects, a number of delegations referred to the indispensable role of solidarity and political will between and within Governments in support not only of ODA, but specifically for the centrality of children in the development process and the role of UNICEF therein. The problem was common to all and required a common solution.

100. Several delegations referred to an expanded role for programme countries in resource mobilization. This included: (a) the need for leaders of developing countries to be advocates for UNICEF work for children with donor Governments whenever they had the opportunity; and (b) the need for certain Governments to look for more options for cost-sharing of basic office operations within the country.

101. Several speakers highlighted the ongoing importance of cost-effectiveness to ensure that UNICEF remained competitive in the increasingly difficult funding environment. One delegation said that this was an important consideration of Governments in their funding decisions, noting that UNICEF had to become more competitive vis-à-vis the diminishing pool of resources, while another speaker highlighted common premises as one way of effecting savings.

102. One delegation noted that in view of diminishing resources, UNICEF should have, a priori, contingency plans for the budget which took into account the possibility of a 5-10 per cent shortfall. It was felt that this would demonstrate responsible financial planning.

103. The importance of contribution management was also raised. Several speakers mentioned broadening the donor base, one in terms of better burden sharing and the other through exploring non-traditional sources.

104. The issue of exchange rate gains/losses was raised by several delegations, one of which noted that in some parts of the world, a strong United States dollar should generate purchasing power gains. The other speaker suggested that 1998 might see some currencies strengthening against the United States dollar.

105. The Executive Director commented briefly, thanking delegations for their contributions, and agreed to convene one or two intersessional meetings on the subject. She noted that the interests of National Committees were being taken into account within the special team, which had one National Committee member. She welcomed the continuing advice of and dialogue with the Board on this subject. (See the annex, decision 1998/6, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

F. Country notes and mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

Introduction

106. The President recalled decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1) on the consideration and approval of country programme recommendations (CPRs), adding that the arrangements contained in the decision would be reviewed at the second regular session in September. He said that following the presentations by the Director, Programme Division, and the Director, Evaluation, Policy and Planning (EPP), delegations would be welcome to make comments of a general nature. Comments about specific country or regional documents would be invited at the appropriate time.

107. The Director, Programme Division, provided an overview of the country notes and MTRs. The 13 country notes used the same format, in line with Board directives, to assure coherence in presentation. However, he added, the contents reflected rather unique and important features in each of the proposed country programme strategies. Previous Board discussions related to the ways and means to strengthen the country programme had been shared systematically with country offices with a view to helping them improve the quality of country programme preparation. He mentioned some of the key features of the proposed country programme objectives and noted that each country programme strategy presented a clear mixture and balance of capacity-building, advocacy and social mobilization, and service delivery as approaches that would be used to achieve the objectives. With regard to the 14 country programme MTRs being presented to the Board, he reported on some of the topics that had been shared with the country offices and outlined the various aspects in the MTR process.

108. Delegations commenting on this agenda item thanked the Director, Programme Division, for his very informative and helpful presentation, and as requested by one speaker, the secretariat agreed that, in future, it would distribute the written statement prior to the oral presentation. While acknowledging the overall good quality of the country notes, and that, as per Board directives, they adhered to a relatively consistent presentation, one speaker expressed regret that there were still many gaps, especially relating to figures on the results of past activities and the targets set. He also noted that the there was no clear description of the human and financial means used to carry out the programmes. Another delegation said that the country notes were so general that it would be difficult to evaluate achievements. To further improve their presentation, the first speaker suggested that the following points be noted: (a) the terms used to describe the projects were too vague and with very general unquantified objectives, which resulted in a lack of accuracy in the final evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed programme; and (b) they were too uniform and did not accurately reflect the individual situations of the countries concerned. Several other speakers associated themselves with the comment under (b) above. He also mentioned that the lengths of the country notes should be consistent with the size of the country and the programme, and several other delegations agreed.

109. However, several other speakers noted with satisfaction that in following a common structure, the country notes presented a more systematic approach, which greatly facilitated comparison and review. One delegation appreciated that many of the country notes took into account developments concerning broader United Nations issues, such as the reform process. Another delegation further clarified that country notes reported on progress at a certain point in the process; thus, it was not realistic to expect them to contain many details about objectives. He recalled to Board members that the country notes preceded the CPRs, and all the concerns raised about the need for clearer objectives and indicators would be taken into account in the preparation of the CPRs.

110. One delegation suggested that the representatives of the largest programme countries be invited to attend the Board to present their programmes. Another speaker said that it might be useful to Board members if the secretariat would arrange a presentation of one country programme and follow it through the various stages of the process, i.e. from country note, to CPR, to MTR and country programme evaluation. This, he felt, would greatly benefit Board members.

111. In response, the Director, Programme Division, recalled to Board members that with regard to length and content, the secretariat was guided by decision 1996/35 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1) on documentation which mandated that the country notes "shall not exceed the range of 3-4 pages". The secretariat felt that the country notes reflected variety in terms of length and operational value and quantification. He further explained that the country notes were essentially a means to provide the programmatic logic of the proposed country programme, particularly the country programme strategy and mix of programmes and broad resources that need to be approved, in the context of the situation analysis and the lessons learned. The kind of detail and operational focus required would be elaborated in the final CPRs submitted for Board approval. He assured delegations that the secretariat would review very carefully the mix of programme strategies and how this was built into the programmes, and that this would be reflected in the documentation.

112. The improved quality of the MTRs over previous years was noted by several speakers who said that they were more analytical and very informative. The MTR for West and Central Africa was cited as exemplary. However, several delegations felt that more attention could have been paid to broader issues such

as United Nations reform (including the results of coordination among the various agencies, especially in the context of UNDAF), and the impact of the internal reorganisation of UNICEF headquarters on the functioning of its field offices. Another speaker expressed the view that, in future, the MTRs should have a more systematic approach like the country notes. Delegations were encouraged by the growing involvement of civil society as well as by the increased attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One speaker regretted that the MTRs for Brazil and Uganda were not available for consideration. The Director, Programme Division, informed delegations that the Brazil document was available and would be distributed.

113. In response to a query about the financing of MTRs and evaluations, the Director, Programme Division, explained that their costs were built into the budgets of the country programmes as part of normal operations. The reviews were undertaken as a requirement of the programming process so the costs were covered in that context. To the extent that the participation of headquarters' colleagues was required, the costs would be covered by headquarters.

114. The Director, EPP, highlighted two key dimensions of the regional reports: the increasing importance of evaluation; and the increasing relevance and visibility of children's rights. Evaluations were being used to identify and overcome problems, improve programme performance and promote organisational learning. Action to reinforce the management of the evaluation function included strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation capacity, more effective dissemination of results and more systematic follow-up on findings and recommendations. She highlighted some of the specific regional actions. The reports reflected an increasing consideration of children's rights in UNICEF work, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child serving as a reference to monitor the situation of children and assess the impact of projects and programmes, and she cited some of the relevant themes dealt with in the reports. The evaluations further stressed the relevance of the accountability and participation of Governments at national and subnational levels, and showed the value of the involvement of civil society. She concluded by presenting the UNICEF Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which constituted a comprehensive illustration of the process of implementation of children's rights and the role played by UNICEF.

115. One speaker emphasized that the evaluation process was a key issue at field level and was closely linked to fund-raising as the demonstration of results and achievements would influence decisions about future contributions. Several delegations welcomed the focus on child rights and expressed interest in the findings and results. One delegation stressed that monitoring and evaluation were very important management tools for programme implementation, which would help to identify the most efficient and effective ways to achieve programme objectives and ensure the optimal use of resources. Several delegations highlighted the need for the close involvement of Governments and for the participation of the beneficiaries, including children themselves, to improve programme effectiveness and foster a sense of ownership. Two delegations wanted to hear more about how the results of evaluations were shared, how they influenced programme design, and how lessons learned from successful projects fed into programme and policy development. Appreciation was expressed for the Implementation Handbook.

116. The Director, EPP, thanked all delegations for their comments. She agreed that reporting on results would contribute to better resource mobilization, mentioning the evaluation of the Tunisia primary education project as providing such an example. UNICEF concern to monitor progress towards results had stimulated the evaluation of multiple indicator cluster surveys, which showed that they had led to: (a) improved capacity to collect information on children;

(b) increased recognition of the value of children's rights; and (c) the need for new strategies for monitoring decade goals. Evaluations also influenced the mix of programme strategies as illustrated by the Nigeria country programme evaluation, which recommended a shift of emphasis from service delivery to capacity-building, and the Zanzibar study, which demonstrated the need for community involvement and education for effective malaria control. The importance of capacity-building, advocacy and the creation of national ownership were recurrent themes in many evaluations. She confirmed that evaluation was an ongoing process, pointing to the increasing emphasis on the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan as a sign that monitoring and evaluation were integral parts of the programme cycle. The participation of children and the involvement of communities were stressed in several evaluations, including the Programa de la Región Andina (Programme for the Andean Region) (PROANDES), the Zanzibar study, and the hygiene education and sanitation programmes in Mali and the Niger. The water programme of the Lao People's Democratic Republic provided just one example of ways in which country programmes were adjusted and improved in light of evaluations. She said that UNICEF recognized the special challenge of emergency countries and that monitoring and evaluation tools were being developed to meet their specific needs. The results of evaluation work were being shared with UNICEF partners at country and global levels through informal exchanges, participation at inter-agency and professional meetings, and electronic networking.

Eastern and Southern Africa

117. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa introduced the country notes for Angola (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.8) and Kenya (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.10), and highlighted aspects of the summary of MTRs and major evaluations carried out during 1997 (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.1). She also provided a brief overview of the situation in the region.

118. With regard to Angola, several delegations felt that the programme objectives were too ambitious given the country's absorptive capacity and the amount of UNICEF resources allocated. A clearer focus on child survival and sustainability, with a few well-defined programmes such as the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), was suggested. One delegation said that the UNICEF strategy in Angola was based on the assumption of a rapid move towards peace and that the strategy was poorly suited to war conditions. The Regional Director replied that an emergency response was built into the programme, which was flexible and could be adjusted based on the annual reviews. Another delegation said that while the country note contained elements of emergency assistance and long-term technical assistance, the long-term technical cooperation strategy required further elaboration. Donors supported programme elements in the areas of landmine awareness, EPI and strengthening of local management capacity, especially for health and education, and called for UNICEF advocacy for increased government financing of the social sector. Two delegations questioned the accuracy of the data in the situation analysis section. One speaker appreciated the mention of UNDAF.

119. One delegation commended UNICEF efforts over the last two years to strengthen and adapt the Kenya programme to country capacity and resources and agreed with the priority programme areas. Two delegations expressed satisfaction with the strengthened ties with bilateral and multilateral organizations, with one making special mention of the good cooperation with the Government. One speaker expressed the hope that recent activities had contributed to improved accountability. Regarding its own country note, the delegation of Kenya expressed the desire for normalisation of cooperation with UNICEF. The speaker also said that the resources mentioned in the country note seemed insufficient to cover the planned activities. The Regional Director

replied that an initiative was under way to attract private sector funding for children in Kenya.

120. Several delegations expressed concern that (a) the provision of basic services had diminished in the region; (b) programmes to meet survival needs had to be strengthened and enhanced; and (c) a clearer focus on sustainability was needed, such as the replacement of aging cold-chain equipment and the provision of vaccines. One delegation requested that any budget cuts related to Africa be considered with circumspection. The Regional Director responded that UNICEF was committed to survival issues such as EPI and was active in immunization days in most countries in the region. In addition to cold-chain equipment and vaccines, assistance was being provided in the areas of training and capacity-building to strengthen sustainability. National Immunization Days strengthened ongoing EPI activities and included other health interventions, such as the provision of vitamin A; and the Vaccine Independence Initiative was being implemented where practical. The CPRs being presented at the second regular session in September would show the extent of cooperation in child survival.

121. In addressing the Ethiopia MTR, that country's delegation expressed appreciation to UNICEF and the Executive Board for 40 years of development cooperation assistance and concurred with the MTR process and its outcome. The speaker expressed the need for continued assistance for child survival. Another delegation commended the work of the UNICEF staff in Ethiopia and said that they had allocated supplementary funds for education. Improved immunization rates owing to the efforts of UNICEF, the Government and NGO partners were also noted. One speaker expressed concern about the problems experienced with cash and supply assistance. The Deputy Executive Director, who had co-chaired the MTR, endorsed the positive comments made by the delegation of Ethiopia. She noted that there had been continuing discussions since the document was prepared in November. There were no major outstanding issues and lessons learned had been incorporated into the programme.

122. In response to a query about the Government's objection to the communication programme, the Regional Director explained that the Government wanted the communications activities integrated into each component rather than as a separate programme, and that this change had been made.

123. One delegation noted that the Zimbabwe MTR showed that corrective measures had been taken based on changing economic and political realities.

124. The representative of Burundi recognized the laudable efforts and courageous work of UNICEF staff in a difficult situation of social and political disorder and natural disasters and noted their good cooperation with the country team in Bujumbura.

West and Central Africa

125. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa introduced the country notes for Benin, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia and Mauritania (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.11-E/ICEF/1998/P/L.14, respectively), and provided highlights of the summary of MTRs and major evaluations carried out in the region during 1997 (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.2).

126. One delegation expressed appreciation for the emphasis that was given to basic education in Benin.

127. Commenting on the country note for Equatorial Guinea, the same speaker felt that the lessons learned on the greater involvement of beneficiaries should have included an increased focus on families and the civil society in which they

live in addition to Government. The delegation noted that the strategy proposed for Equatorial Guinea was similar to and compatible with its own in meeting children's and women's needs in other countries.

128. The same delegation noted that the programme strategy proposed for Mauritania was coherent and worthy of support. There were good examples of joint collaboration between its Government and UNICEF in Mauritania, including the work being done in nutrition and with the Mayors as Defenders of Children.

129. The same delegation agreed with the decision to revise the objectives of the Niger country programme following the MTR. The activities in the Niger were viewed as too dispersed to respond to the serious deterioration of the situation in the country, and it was suggested that for the remainder of the current programme cycle, as well as for the next one, the number of objectives should be reduced and more focused. The UNICEF country team was congratulated for the programme achievements under difficult circumstances.

130. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the quality of the summary presented. One delegation noted the close collaboration it had with UNICEF while leading the MTR. The review indicated that the collaboration had brought about some significant achievements in the areas of immunization, water and sanitation, and primary education. Another delegation noted with satisfaction the quality of the document and the progress achieved in the country programmes discussed. The same speaker felt that at least part of the achievements were due to better coordination of activities as well as better cooperation between its Government and UNICEF, particularly in the areas of urban health and girl's education. Another delegation expressed concern that the objectives were often too ambitious, which was a recurring theme in the document. However, the same delegation appreciated the work being done to eliminate guinea worm disease. While acknowledging that most country programmes were achieving positive results in environments that were diverse and difficult, concern was expressed that understaffing in certain key areas, especially in immunization, might jeopardize sustainability.

131. One delegation appreciated the studies undertaken in Benin, the Côte d'Ivoire and the Niger on social expenditures in the context of the 20/20 Initiative. In addition, the delegation felt that practical studies of this nature were important for improving programme performance, stressing that such studies provided vital information to programme managers and decision makers and expressing an interest in the follow-up on the latter. The same delegation also requested copies of the studies for information.

Latin America and the Caribbean

132. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the country note for Ecuador (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.15) and the summary of MTRs and major evaluations of country programmes carried out in the region (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.3). She noted that the Brazil MTR had been completed too late in the year to be included in the report, but that a summary leaflet was being made available for the information of the Board. In her brief overview, the Regional Director outlined the programme strategies being proposed for Ecuador and emphasized that preparing programmes from a rights' perspective did not mean that basic services were being abandoned. She also highlighted the priority that had been given to monitoring and evaluation work in the region, noting that it would be an important contribution to inter-agency work on United Nations reform, particularly CCAs and UNDAF.

133. The Regional Director was congratulated by many delegations for her efforts in the region. However, concern was expressed that the region was

currently suffering from an economic slowdown, declining capital flow and inequalities as a consequence of structural adjustment programmes. UNICEF was strongly urged to make sure that broader advocacy and social mobilization efforts did not detract from the efforts required to ensure the provision basic services. One delegation referred to the "unfinished business" in the area of child survival and called on UNICEF to first ensure that gains achieved in fields such as immunization were sustained.

134. The Ecuador country note was endorsed by many delegations, who viewed it as being well-balanced, well-targeted, precise and informative, and expressed appreciation for the integrated local approach. One delegation welcomed the focus on poverty reduction, access to clean water and sanitation, and childhood education. The delegation pointed out, however, that the targets for basic services, particularly health and nutrition, had not been met and, therefore, expressed concern that the focus on the new mandates of public policy, empowerment and capacity-building might be premature. The same delegation encouraged more collaboration with the donor community. With respect to its own country note, the delegation of Ecuador welcomed the ongoing cooperation between UNICEF, the Government, NGOs and other organizations representing civil society in the country. One delegation requested more information on national counterparts and an analysis of programme sustainability. Another speaker noted that the strategies used were closely linked to those used in the subregional PROANDES and Amazon programmes. The same delegation welcomed the innovative strategy used in the programme which aimed to enhance participation to advance children's and women's rights based on the Children's Code, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. One observer delegation expressed appreciation for the work of the Regional Office in carrying out monitoring and evaluation workshops. The conclusions and recommendations identified were useful working tools for programming.

135. In response, the Regional Director said that the programme was designed to ensure that the work in the poorest areas would continue in strengthening the health and education systems, local networks, planning and early warning systems. At the same time, it emphasized the importance of building on the linkages between concrete localized experiences and the capacity and ability to design social policy at the national level based on those experiences.

136. Referring to the Paraguay MTR, one delegation noted that maternal mortality remained a major problem and that immunization rates seemed to have dropped. Another delegation stated that one way to overcome the problem of sustainability would be through a people-centred approach to development, paying special attention to protection issues and the improvement of basic services through the understanding and application of international Conventions.

137. While supporting the special focus on the girl child in the Caribbean, several speakers expressed concern regarding the special problems among boys in the region. One delegation commended UNICEF initiatives in its country with respect to children's participation. Referring to her country's recent inclusion in the multi-country programme for the Caribbean and the fact that the earlier ad hoc approach to programmes in that country had passed, another delegation requested increased UNICEF support for implementation of the programme since there was currently no UNICEF representation in the country. In responding to this concern, the Regional Director assured that adequate support would be provided through the UNICEF regional and subregional presence and that UNICEF would also collaborate closely with other United Nations agencies present in the country.

138. On the question of the balance between service delivery and advocacy, the Regional Director said that UNICEF was looking carefully at direct support to communities that were most in need and required the provision of basic services, on the one hand, and facilitating and supporting the creation of an institutional context in the country as a whole as well as locally so that universal rights to good quality services could be realised, on the other. She explained that UNICEF had limited resources and did not have the capacity to directly provide services, which was the reason UNICEF focused on promoting the sustainability of those services through awareness-creation, advocacy and capacity-building among those directly responsible, such as central and local government, NGOs and the community. She stressed that the use of advocacy did not mean reduced service delivery, and provided specific examples of what advocacy meant: providing technical support to legal reform; reinforcing capacity for local planning and delivery through training and communication; and promoting and identifying mechanisms for child participation. She noted that in Latin America today, countries themselves were able to purchase vaccines. For its part, UNICEF tried to highlight the importance of reaching the poorest communities and to strengthen local networks.

East Asia and the Pacific

139. The Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific introduced the country notes for the Philippines (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.16) and Thailand (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.17) and highlighted some of the key aspects of the regions MTRs and major evaluations of country programmes. He also briefly discussed the major trends and developments in the region, highlighting the recent economic turmoil affecting many countries.

140. Several delegations referred to the Philippines country note, expressing their full support for the proposed strategies. One delegation was impressed by the significant reduction in maternal mortality, but stressed the importance of coordination with UNFPA in maternal and child health. With regard to lessons learned, the delegation pointed to the importance of the 1991 Local Government Code for decentralization, which had led to greater participation by civil society. The delegation urged UNICEF to support capacity-building in local government and also welcomed the shift of emphasis from specific disease control to an integrated hierarchy of activities. The delegation noted that, by specifying the regions where it intended to operate, UNICEF would become more efficient. The delegation drew the attention of the Executive Board to paragraph 3 of the country note and pointed out that the poverty figures seemed to be reversed. The Regional Director noted the comments on the poverty figures and said that this would need to be verified. He indicated that while the overall focus of UNICEF interventions was shifting from specific disease control to integrated services, activities targeted at specific diseases such as polio were still a priority.

141. Another delegation expressed full support for the objectives and strategies presented in the Philippines country note, adding that they were consistent with the protection and promotion of the rights of children and women. The delegation welcomed UNICEF assistance in translating the rights approach into practical measures. There was a long history of cooperation between the Philippines and UNICEF, especially at country level, and much progress had been made. One delegation pointed out that planned UNICEF activities would take place in a favourable context. The Government was determined to take action in favour of children's rights. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994 and established child courts in 1997. The proposed programme seemed relevant and would underline close cooperation with the national administration.

142. While citing the Philippines as a good example of a country note, one speaker said that nutrition should figure more prominently in the proposed strategy. The delegation also pointed to the need for more coordination with bilateral agencies at field level.

143. A donor delegation welcomed the strong initiative for South/South Cooperation in the Thailand country note. UNICEF was urged to play a strong role in supporting the dissemination of social development experiences as an important part of such cooperation. The Regional Director stressed that Thailand would be proud to share its experiences in the areas of nutrition, sanitation and HIV/AIDS. Another delegation pointed out that the Thailand country note reflected the National Development Plan, the National Programme of Action for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework for the UNICEF programme of cooperation. The delegation was of the opinion that it would be difficult to reach the objectives without additional donor support. The Executive Board was encouraged to lend its support to mobilizing resources for the proposed programme. Another delegation also noted the emphasis on local fund-raising in Thailand and pointed out that while poverty levels were being reduced in both Thailand and the Philippines, the current financial crisis might have an impact on progress. Concerning Thailand, one delegation suggested the need for a more detailed explanation of planned expenditures. The Regional Director indicated that this would be provided in the CPR.

144. Several delegations commented on the impact of the financial crisis in the region, pointing out that the documents did not seem to reflect the current crisis, which might affect social policy. It was suggested that the proposals might need to be reviewed in light of the new regional context. One speaker felt that in times of economic crises, the role of UNICEF in ensuring the protection of children assumed greater importance. The Regional Director pointed out that the country notes had been prepared some months prior to the current economic turmoil in the region, but in developing the CPR further, the new reality would be taken into account. He added that the Regional Office was collaborating with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in carrying out an analysis of the impact of the economic crisis in the region.

145. Concerning MTRs and evaluations in the region, one delegation said that the review documents were well prepared and provided useful lessons. For example, the programme for working children and street children in the Philippines demonstrated that a small amount of funds could achieve impressive results. The delegation urged UNICEF to take the positive experience of this particular evaluation into account for future programming and policy formulation. In response, the Regional Director pointed out that the lessons learned from programmes in education and street children had been fed back into the new country programme for the Philippines.

146. The Regional Director thanked Board members for their valuable comments. On the issues raised regarding cooperation with United Nations partners, he said that UNICEF would ensure that coordination with UNFPA was strengthened in the Philippines. He also pointed out that all United Nations agencies, except the Regional Office of WHO, already shared common premises in Manila, which reinforced coordination. In conclusion, the Regional Director urged the Executive Board to remain conscious of and support the special needs of the region at this difficult juncture.

South Asia

147. The Regional Director for South Asia introduced the country notes for India (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.9), Maldives (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.18) and Pakistan (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.19), highlighting some of the similarities in programme

strategies among the countries as a reflection of a regional orientation of UNICEF support. He emphasized that the country note for India had been presented and discussed at the January 1997 session of the Executive Board, after which a decision had been taken to extend the 1996-1997 bridging programme for an additional year and to prepare a new country programme for the period 1999-2002. The previous country note remained valid and was being resubmitted to allow new Board members to comment on it prior to the preparation and submission of the CPR. As there had been no MTRs in the region during 1997, the report before the Board focused on major evaluations in the areas of salt iodization, primary education and immunization, and on the steps being taken in the region to strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities in general.

148. The delegation of India stated that India country note had been discussed extensively in 1997. Subsequently, the approval of a bridging programme had enabled the Government and UNICEF to strengthen and refine strategies. There had been significant initiatives to put in place an enabling environment for children's and women's rights and a shift of responsibility from central to state governments. This process of decentralization would mean greater emphasis on community participation through the panchayats (administrative district). UNICEF was urged not to forget several areas of the country where it had been unable to focus its attention: the remote north-eastern states as well as some large urban areas. In this "other India", characterised by high levels of poverty and extensive urban slums, but regarded by UNICEF as "non-focus states", there had been little progress in promoting and protecting child rights. These areas should not be forgotten while developing the new country programme, which, said one speaker, represented the crystallization of common experiences between UNICEF and India. However, he added, it was important to remind the Board that the proposed objectives could only be achieved through the mobilization of greater resources. The delegation pointed out the importance of evaluation and the dissemination of evaluation results. It also expressed its appreciation and thanks to WHO, Rotary International, the Governments of Denmark, Japan and the United Kingdom, and others for their support to the recent highly successful polio immunization campaign.

149. One delegation pointed out that it had made extensive comments on the India country note in January 1997, which remained valid. He added, however, his delegation's support for the child rights and gender strategy of the country note. UNICEF was urged to take a strategic and systematic approach to the problems of child labour, sexual exploitation and children with disabilities. Coordination with other agencies on this issue would be important. The delegation also underlined the importance of sexual and reproductive health. In the opinion of the delegation, collaboration with UNFPA, the focus on adolescent health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS needed greater emphasis in the India country note. In responding to the delegation's comments, the Regional Director noted that views previously expressed by delegations on the country note had been taken into account in the preparation of the new programme, and that the additional comments would be helpful in its finalization. On the issue of sexual and reproductive health, he informed members of the creation of a regional task force which aimed to help countries, including India, deal with this issue more systematically. Similarly, the subject of adolescent health had also been put on the regional agenda for 1998.

150. One delegation pointed to the catalytic role and strong field presence of UNICEF as important factors in the success of United Nations reform in India and noted the clear desire for strong and effective coordination. However, the delegation hoped that in the forthcoming CPR, there would be a clear indication of the role of the programme within UNDAF, which was under preparation in India.

151. Associating itself with the goals and strategies of the Maldives country note and highlighting the special nature of the archipelago, one delegation urged UNICEF to pursue decentralization actively in the programme. The delegation noted that one half of the population of the country was under 15 years old, and the proposed programme of cooperation was an integral part of the National Development Plan. The delegation also felt that some of the objectives would need to be pursued in close collaboration with other agencies active in the country, for example with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the area of nutrition.

152. Commenting on the country note for Pakistan, one delegation urged greater cooperation with bilateral agencies in the country, especially in the areas of health, education and water. The speaker also wondered whether the target of the elimination of bonded child labour was reflected adequately in the programme budget given the enormity of the problem. The Regional Director said that the problem of child labour was enormous and complex throughout South Asia and that it was important not to lose sight of this fact. UNICEF resources were small and its contribution could only be catalytic and strategic. The region as a whole had taken up the challenge of eliminating child labour and UNICEF was responding by, among other things, assigning a senior adviser on child rights to the Regional Office.

153. One delegation pointed out that it had a sizeable foreign aid programme in South and South East Asia in which UNICEF was a major partner. The delegation pointed out that the major problem in assistance programmes was sustainability, adding that more attention should be given to this aspect of programmes. The delegation appreciated the positive results in salt iodization and immunization in Bangladesh and welcomed the regional nutrition initiative being undertaken in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), noting that there had been no improvement in nutritional status in Pakistan in 20 years. Polio and measles were still endemic in the region and, thus, much work remained to be done. The delegation noted that UNICEF was focusing increasingly on the poorest countries, particularly in Africa, but that there were large numbers of children in Asia that needed help and the region should remain an area of priority concern for UNICEF.

154. One delegation underlined the challenges facing the South Asia region. The delegation pointed out that the Regional Director's presentation had focused on problems, progress and prospects. It would be important to involve Governments, NGOs and civil society in addressing these. The delegation expressed its agreement with the Regional Director's argument that rights and goals were convergent.

155. The Regional Director expressed his agreement with comments made on the importance of sustainability. He stressed that all development programmes should have a high-quality process which would lead to empowerment and sustainability. It was not a trade-off between outcome and process; both were equally important. In South Asia, the poor were seen as key actors, not beneficiaries, of assistance transactions.

156. The Regional Director also underlined the importance of collaboration with AsDB on nutrition. This had begun as a UNICEF led initiative, developed into a joint effort with AsDB and had now become an initiative of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Middle East and North Africa

157. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa introduced the country note for Djibouti (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.20) and the summary of major

evaluations of country programmes (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.6), and spoke about the programming environment in the region.

158. One delegation expressed appreciation for the close cooperation between UNICEF and his country's Ministry of Cooperation, adding that it should continue and be further strengthened as an exemplary approach to support Djibouti in achieving its social development objectives, particularly in the areas of basic education, primary health care and sanitation. The Regional Director responded that would be facilitated by the upgrading of the UNICEF office to full country office status.

159. Several other speakers noted the successes achieved in the country under difficult circumstances, with one speaker suggesting that the programme strategy needed to focus more on the education sector, particularly girls' education, as well as on a more effective advocacy strategy for gender and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNICEF was encouraged to continue its efforts to improve the well-being of children and women.

160. The evaluation document was found to be thought-provoking in that it summarized projects that truly reflected the scope and significance of the role played by UNICEF in the region. It was felt that an exchange of this type of information among countries in the region would be beneficial, especially the experience of the income-generating project of the Egypt Family Development Fund. The Regional Director indicated that offices within the region would ensure that information on interesting projects and approaches was being shared in a timely manner.

161. In response to a suggestion that a regional seminar be organized to assess implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Regional Director said that the proposal was timely and would be seriously considered.

162. One delegation said that many countries in the region had achieved remarkable results because of the consistent emphasis by UNICEF on education, health and nutrition for children and mothers. The same speaker welcomed the study on child labour and reiterated her country's resolve to address the challenge of child labour and child protection.

163. In closing, the Regional Director thanked delegations for welcoming him as the new Regional Director for the region, for their encouraging words of support and cooperation, and for their appreciation of UNICEF work in the region.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

164. The Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States introduced the summary of MTRs, covering the outcomes of the assessment of UNICEF cooperation in eight countries, and major evaluations conducted in the region (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.7).

165. All delegations addressing this agenda item welcomed the Regional Director's presentation of the first MTR for the region, with several commenting on the high quality and conciseness of the document. Several delegations also commented on the usefulness of the MTR as a means of maintaining a focus on real problems as well as flexibility in a changing environment.

166. One delegation noted that the MTR had led to corrective action by UNICEF, including a shift from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and development. This focus strengthened national capacity, including at the local level, for

carrying out pilot projects and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The same delegation commented on the good participation by Governments, UNICEF partners and NGOs, adding that it provided a good foundation for seeking additional resources. Several other delegations also commended UNICEF work in the region in serving as a catalyst to bring together governmental and non-governmental partners to both improve programme implementation and strengthen the development of civil society. The Regional Director acknowledged the important emerging role of civil society through its NGOs in bringing the discussion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the mainstream of national dialogue, and pledged UNICEF support in strengthening their roles. He specifically commended Kazakhstan's special role in stimulating the response of all the countries of the Central Asian republics on the Convention.

167. Several delegations noted that, in a number of countries, children continued to suffer from economic decline, market transition and emerging crisis situations. They said that the MTR summary had accurately captured the continuing problems of budgetary difficulties, growth in unemployment and poverty. Two speakers urged that additional financial resources be made available to address the specific problems of children in the region.

168. One speaker felt that the report could have been shorter with better use of regional statistics, while another speaker said that the database system to monitor the social conditions during transition to a market economy in the region (MONEE project) maintained by the International Child Development Centre in Florence was extremely useful in this regard. Another speaker commented on the improved process aimed at strengthening the policy related to the use of statistics, especially at the district level. However, one delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the report as only 50 per cent of all 1997 MTRs had been included in the document, and the country reviews were unclear on lessons learned and concrete proposals for future work. The Regional Director informed Board members that the MTRs for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Yugoslavia were only completed in late November 1997, too late for inclusion in the report. Therefore, the outcome of those MTRs would be reported on as part of the CPRs submissions in September.

169. Special note was made of the continuing problems for children, especially in health, caused by the after-effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Another delegation commented on other environmental tragedies, such as former nuclear test sites in Semipalatinsk, which continued to have a devastating effect on the health and development of children. The delegation recalled that a General Assembly resolution called for special implementation of programmes and projects. UNICEF efforts to integrate work on the Convention on the Rights of the Child with its approach to the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region, as well as to support universal salt iodization, in part as a response to nuclear tragedies, were commended by many delegations. The Regional Director agreed that the region had serious environmental problems that would be difficult to solve, but he pledged that UNICEF would continue to work in the most effective ways with the limited resources available. He also commended the countries that had taken the challenge of universal salt iodization seriously as one means of combating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

170. One delegation mentioned two successful pilot projects being carried out relating to the problems of AIDS and drug use. It was also noted that important advocacy work was being carried out in the areas of protecting child rights and helping children at risk. One delegation said that UNICEF child protection activities in Romania were in keeping with priorities as perceived by most experts, namely the decentralization of social protections services and family education. The delegation pointed out, and another delegation concurred, that

UNICEF could take greater account of activities conducted by the European Union in the field of child protection. The Regional Director thanked delegations which had commented on the relevance of UNICEF child protection activities, especially efforts to deinstitutionalise children currently residing in orphanages. He took note that the delegations had stressed the challenge of integrating these efforts into a decentralised system of social services at the district level. He also said that UNICEF would take into account and pursue the suggestions to follow-up and expand collaboration with the European Union.

171. One speaker thought that the report could have contained more information on the impact of armed conflict in Azerbaijan since there were 1 million refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country. This delegation could not fully accept the assertion that the overall situation in the region was shifting from emergencies to rehabilitation and development. The delegation also emphasised the need for further programme implementation for children, refugees and IDPs, which would provide a good opportunity for cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations agencies. The Regional Director confirmed that UNICEF understood the problems with the refugees in the Transcaucasus, was currently working jointly with UNHCR to provide services and would continue to focus on this issue in the future. Additional resources were needed to support the supplementary-funded proposals in this area that still lacked funding.

172. Following up on the discussion regarding the shift from emergency to rehabilitation and development, one delegation cited his country as an example. This development had led to further successful cooperation between the Government and UNICEF as evidenced in the MTR. UNICEF was requested to give special attention to the recently reintegrated region of Eastern Slavonia, especially for IDPs. UNICEF was also commended for its help in the successful implementation of mine awareness and Mayors as Defenders of Children activities.

173. Several delegations expressed appreciation for UNICEF support to capacity-building activities and various pilot projects, although more information was requested on what had actually been accomplished. Special mention was made of the district-based maternal and child health project in the Kuba District of Azerbaijan. With respect to the points made on decentralised health care, the Regional Director advised that UNICEF was collaborating closely with the Government and the World Bank in the areas of health and education reform, and was working to support decentralization in the Kuba District of Azerbaijan.

174. UNICEF was urged to increase attention to education, such as the production of textbooks. The same delegation also requested more detailed information relating to basic educational systems and how this dovetailed with general programmes in Azerbaijan. The delegation also asked which country in the region had not responded to the questionnaire circulated on iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) and youth health. In response, the Regional Director noted that 26 of 27 countries had responded to the regional evaluation on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and all countries had responded on IDD. He did not know which country had not responded on BFHI, but agreed to provide this information to the concerned delegation.

175. On the subject of UNDAF, one delegation questioned how United Nations reform and UNDAF approaches were being implemented, taking into consideration that UNICEF/United Nations presence was quite recent in many of the countries in the region. Another delegation also commented on the usefulness of indicators similar to those used by UNICEF which measure the utility and efficiency of work carried out by various United Nations agencies for evaluating UNDAF. The delegation expressed a need to find similar indicators for other United Nations agencies and for cooperation with other United Nations agencies involved with

projects for children. The Regional Director commented that Romania and Turkey were among the 19 countries participating in the pilot phase of UNDAF. Romania was already well into the process, whereas Turkey would join the pilot activities after mid-1998. He also noted that many of the comments made by delegations mirrored those made with respect to Viet Nam at the joint meeting of the UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA Executive Boards earlier at the present session regarding the inadequacy of 13 weeks to prepare the UNDAF document and to put the full process into place.

176. One delegation said that, although it strongly supported UNICEF activities in the region, it wished to draw the attention of Board members to the need to carefully review and assess the staffing problems of the Regional Office. In this connection, another delegation said that, in future, it would be useful to include more information on difficulties in programme operations in the MTR summary document.

Europe

177. The Regional Director for Europe said that the priorities for the Geneva regional office were to represent and advocate for UNICEF in the region and to help manage the relationship with the 37 National Committees for UNICEF. The major tasks for the next two years would be to strengthen support for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for increasing public awareness of the Convention and for increasing the traditionally high level of resources provided by Europe for the world's children. At the regional level, through the European Union and the Council of Europe, key political and policy developments were strengthening the environment for child rights, although the primary responsibility for implementing the Convention remained with national Governments. In support of this process, UNICEF was working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

178. Important to this work was the recently launched Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a series of country-level situation analyses. The latter were intended to be developed in close collaboration with Governments, National Committees, NGOs, academic and research institutions, the media and human rights organizations. The objective of the situation analyses was not to lead to UNICEF programme cooperation, but rather to create a practical, rights-based focus for UNICEF advocacy, for support to implementation of the Convention and for major UNICEF partnerships.

179. With regard to the National Committees, there had been real progress, he said, even though 1997 had not been an easy year. The fund-raising environment had been difficult, there had been a major restructuring of the secretariat services to the Committees, and the reorganization of the greeting card and private sector operations was continuing. None the less, new internal mechanisms had been established for collaboration and coordination, as had clearer procedures for policy guidance and oversight and priorities for joint planning. Priority issues for action were the development of subregional approaches, the allocation of and reporting on general resources and supplementary funds, financial monitoring of the Committees' performance, the governance and internal structure of the Committees, taxation issues and retention rates, and enhancing the Committees' role in supporting implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

G. Oral report on implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors

180. Requested by the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1997 (decision 1997/10), the Deputy Executive Director presented an oral update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and updated timetable indicating the dates when follow-up action would have been completed in the areas that needed to be addressed. She expressed appreciation to the Board of Auditors for the useful recommendations and advice as well as for the spirit of openess and cooperation that had been maintained during the interim audits in the present biennium. UNICEF, she said, continued to give the highest attention to implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and would undertake all necessary follow-up. She then addressed the main recommendations in their audit of the biennium 1994-1995 accounts.

Cash assistance to Governments

181. The Board of Auditors recommended that the policy of recording cash assistance to Governments as programme expenditures at the time the funds are advanced be reviewed for consistency with the definition of programme expenditure in UNICEF financial regulations and programme management procedure.

182. The Deputy Executive Director reported that this recommendation was currently under review by senior management and involved not only accounting standards, but equally important, the related programme policies and procedures as applied by UNICEF under its programmes of cooperation. The Board of Auditors had been kept informed of the ongoing work on this matter. Last year, in her introduction of the UNICEF report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.14), she referred to the requirement of the new field system (Programme Manager System (PROMS)) to prevent the automatic provision of cash assistance to recipients when there are amounts outstanding for more than nine months. The PROMS testing undertaken in several field locations in 1997 has indicated that this functionality is working properly. In addition, UNICEF has substantially improved the liquidation of transactions. At 31 December 1995, the total cash assistance outstanding was $120.7 million; at December 1997, the total was $108.2 million. Amounts outstanding for more than nine months have been reduced by 68 per cent from $34.3 million to $10.9 million.

Reserve for doubtful contributions receivable and write-offs

183. The Board of Auditors recommended that UNICEF should establish a reserve for its doubtful contributions receivable to ensure an accurate disclosure of its realizable assets. The Board has been apprised that the secretariat will submit to the Executive Board, in 1998, a proposal for the establishment of a reasonable level of reserve.

Internal control and internal audit recommendations

184. The Board of Auditors has recommended that headquarters should strengthen its monitoring of the operation of internal control systems in field offices. It has also recommended that responsiveness to internal audit findings and recommendations may be improved.

185. The Executive Director continues to be strongly committed to improving the internal control systems in all UNICEF offices. New tools for identifying risks and anticipating problems have been introduced to help managers identify potential problems so that corrective actions can be taken in the early stages. These include training sessions on control self-assessment. Regional management

teams have been established and have already begun strengthening systems for regional oversight of country programme management performance, reviewing and ensuring follow-up on audit and management reports, and developing performance indicators for reporting by all offices. In general, where there are areas for concern, UNICEF continues to fully support the efforts of the Office of Internal Audit to ensure that the problems are highlighted and the necessary preventive/corrective action taken. Monitoring of responses to internal audit findings during 1996-1997 has shown significant improvements in this area.

Accuracy of income projections and the UNICEF liquidity position

186. The Board of Auditors recommended that UNICEF should further improve the accuracy of the income projections for unfunded supplementary programmes through more realistic budgeting and fund-raising strategies. They have also stated that the declining liquidity of UNICEF suggests the need for a reversal of the deliberate strategy of setting expenditure levels higher than income.

187. As indicated in the Board of Auditors' recommendation, the strategy of setting expenditure levels higher than income was deliberately adopted at the time when there was a sufficient fund balance to support it. UNICEF has already, a few years ago, moved away from such a strategy because of the decline in the fund balance. Generally, UNICEF affordability levels are established annually within the framework of the MTP, which is submitted to the Executive Board for approval. On a monthly basis, income and expenditure levels are regularly monitored to ensure that UNICEF operations are well within this framework. The secretariat continues to strive to improve the accuracy of supplementary funds income projections and assists field offices in the preparation of programmes for submission to potential donors for supplementary funding. The secretariat has also increased the frequency and rigour with which unfunded programmes are reviewed.

Allocation of general resources

188. The Board of Auditors recommended that the procedures for allocating general resources to country programmes should be reviewed to enhance comparability of data, eligibility for assistance and the determination of cut-off and exit criteria.

189. UNICEF undertook a major review, from 1995 to 1997, of the procedure for allocating general resources, ensuring extensive consultations with field offices and members of the Executive Board. During this review, UNICEF also considered the Board of Auditors' comments and recommendations on the subject. The Executive Board approved the modified general resources allocation system at its June 1997 annual session for implementation in 1999 (decision 1997/18).

Achievement of the decade goals

190. The Board of Auditors has also made recommendations that UNICEF should undertake collaborative studies into selected programme sectors to determine the level of achievement of the decade goals, sustainability of programmes and national capacity-building.

191. UNICEF continues to undertake collaborative studies in the areas mentioned by the Board of Auditors. From 1994 to 1996, UNICEF, in collaboration with Governments and other partners, helped to organize special surveys initially to assess the achievement of the mid-decade goals in more than 60 countries where national reporting system were not generating timely data. Follow-up studies are continuing in some of these countries to assess progress towards the decade goals.

192. The concern regarding sustainability of achievements has also been covered in the following:

(a) A major UNICEF workshop conducted in June 1995 produced a conceptual framework and strategies for sustainability that have been widely disseminated;

(b) In 1996, an inter-agency working group comprised of the United States Agency for International Development, the Canadian Public Health Association, WHO, UNICEF and others to focus on the sustainability of universal child immunization was established;

(c) UNICEF undertook a major collaborative study covering eight African countries from 1996 to 1997 to draw lessons from the Bamako Initiative, which emphasizes sustainability through strategies for community participation and co-management;

(d) While UNICEF initiated studies to monitor the 20/20 Initiative in 1995, collaborative work with UNDP in this area was started in 1997. Studies have been carried out in 25 countries to date. All studies, totalling 40, are expected to be completed by October 1998. UNICEF also has collaborated with UNDP on the studies in five African countries on "Pay, Productivity and Public Service".

193. UNICEF is currently working on a study on national capacity-building which will review the technical literature and current practices within UNICEF and developmental agencies for the purpose of developing and testing more effective methodologies and tools for the monitoring/evaluation of capacity-building. In addition, UNICEF is participating in the United Nations evaluation of capacity-building being carried out as part of the triennial policy review. A report on this will be prepared in the third quarter of 1998 for the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Forecasting budgetary requirements and the integrated budget system

194. The Board of Auditors recommended that instead of using the exchange rates available at specified periods of time as the basis for forecasting budgetary requirements, UNICEF should consider an appropriate averaging method to obtain more accurate projections. The Board also recommended that in the design of the integrated budget system, a clear link should be established between administrative costs and the costs of the country programme to achieve proper balance in resource allocations.

195. The Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF have approved a common methodology that will be followed by the three agencies in calculating their budgets. In line with this, UNICEF will use 1 April as the basis of currency adjustment in its normal submission of the biennial support budget, i.e., for approval by the Executive Board in September of the second year of the biennium.

196. To ensure that there is a clear link between the administrative costs and the costs of the country programme, the following procedures are now followed:

(a) A comprehensive review of the programme budget and support budget is made before the CPR is submitted to the Executive Board for approval;

(b) The information on the estimated support budget for the country programme cycle is also provided in the CPR;

(c) When preparing the biennial support budget proposal for consideration by the Executive Board, the programme budget information is similarly provided to serve as a basis for the examination of the relationships between them.

Sales forecasting - GCO

197. The Board recommended that further measures should be taken to improve sales forecasting and to reduce over-ordering of products in order to keep unsold products to the minimum.

198. UNICEF is improving its response time to National Committees with the shortening of the card production cycle. A demand forecasting model will be tested with some key markets, and the National Committees will be encouraged to order more frequently based on more current and actual sales forecasts. These are expected to improve inventory management and forecasting.

Conclusion

199. The Deputy Executive Director said that she and her colleagues were available to provide any additional information/clarification that might be requested. With regard to the establishment of a reasonable reserve for contributions that are written off, several delegations sought clarification as to whether this would actually constitute a contingency fund. The Deputy Executive Director explained that some accounts receivable did not materialize and, therefore, would have to be written off. The Board of Auditors thought that it would be more prudent if a reserve were established to cover this situation.

H. 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

200. The Executive Board had before it a report containing a recommendation by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1998/5), endorsed by the Bureau, that the 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award be presented to the Pacific Regional Human Rights Education Resource Team. In introducing the report, the Director, Programme Division, said that the award was conferred in recognition of the Resource Team's significant contribution to the field of human rights education, including child rights, through a pioneering role in developing an awareness and knowledge of human rights in the Pacific region. (See the annex, decision 1998/7, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

I. Other matters

201. No other matters were raised for discussion.

J. Closing remarks by the Executive Director and the President

202. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the decisions adopted at session, and especially for members' active participation in the budget process. The input provided by delegations through intersessional and other meetings had led to the successful outcome achieved at this session. She looked forward to a similar process in preparing the report on resource mobilization. In addition, the secretariat had found the discussion on country notes to be very useful and would provide feedback to country offices to enable them to prepare the full CPRs for submission to the Board in September.

203. On the joint session with the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, she was encouraged by the support expressed for UNDAF and for the excellent work being done in the field by UNICEF and other United Nations staff. Many interesting questions had been raised about the UNDAF process and UNICEF looked forward to continued input from the Board as the process continued.

204. In closing, she thanked all delegations for their participation and support at the session, especially those from capitals and the National Committees for UNICEF. She paid tribute to two UNICEF staff members - Ed Lannert, Director of the Division of Human Resources, who was retiring after many years of service, and Niger Fisher, Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes, who was taking a leave of absence.

205. The President said that the session had been reasonably business-like and productive, characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill that was unique in the United Nations. This was something to be valued and should not be taken for granted.

Part two

1998 ANNUAL SESSION

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 5 June 1998

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening of the session

206. In his opening remarks, the President of the Executive Board welcomed the participation of the Board of the UNICEF family, including delegations which had travelled from capitals, National Committees for UNICEF and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs). He said that the agenda would allow the Board to address many important issues facing UNICEF today. Their individual importance, he continued, was heightened when seen in the broader context of the United Nations reform process, and as a high profile member of the United Nations community, UNICEF clearly had an obligation to take a leading role. In his review of the major documents before the Board, he made special note of the report on resource mobilization, the discussion of which should guide the secretariat in its preparation of a draft strategy for the September Board session. This, he felt, was one of the most important subjects on the agenda. The Board had to focus on ways to obtain greater predictability of contributions to core resources, assure increased core resources and obtain greater burden sharing among donors to UNICEF. He said that the importance of the discussion to the continued ability of UNICEF to be an effective advocate for children could not be overstated, and he urged delegations to participate as fully as possible to ensure a lively and outcome-oriented discussion.

207. In closing, the President stressed that as a Board, members needed to focus on how they could support and strengthen the work of UNICEF as an integral and very important development agent of the United Nations system. He also reminded delegations of the work of UNICEF staff around the work and the need to ensure that their rights were respected: "The decisions we take at this session should ultimately help them, and through them, the children for whom they are working".

208. The Executive Director also addressed the issue of United Nations reform, noting especially the emergence of collaborative programming frameworks at the country level and the launch of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The work of UNICEF, she said, would be seen increasingly against a backdrop of harmonized United Nations development activities. She felt that the UNDAF guidelines would help to bring child rights closer to the centre of all the work of the United Nations system and to a development agenda "anchored, as never before, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women".

209. She spoke about the traditional priority issues for children, such as child health and nutrition and quality basic education, stressing that while they remained matters of urgency, they were also part and parcel of development. She also addressed a number of the longer-term development needs of children. She said that despite the remarkable progress made in the last eight years, it has been apparent that few countries will reach the World Summit for Children goals by the year 2000. UNICEF would redouble its efforts to assist those countries where major headway towards the goals was both needed and possible.

210. The Executive Director spoke in great detail about the future direction of UNICEF, with its continued emphasis on concrete goals and targets and ever-increasing emphasis on protection issues, all within the framework of the two Conventions. In closing, she acknowledged that: "For more than half a century, UNICEF's successes have grown out of our recognition of the need to

focus on the well-being of the 'whole child' – an all-embracing strategy that has made it possible for this organization to act as a moral force for children the world over, achieving triumphs that were unimaginable only a few decades ago". She urged delegations to "resolve to hold to that course, moving ever forward". (See E/ICEF/1998/CRP.9 for the full text of her statement.)

8. Adoption of the agenda

211. The agenda, timetable and organization of work of the session, as contained in documents E/ICEF/1998/7 and Corr.1, was adopted as amended orally. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1:	Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director
Item 2:	Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work
Item 3:	Report of the Executive Director (Part II)
Item 4:	Follow-up to the World Summit for Children
Item 5:	Follow-up to International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
Item 6:	UNICEF communication policy
Item 7:	Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF
Item 8:	Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF
Item 9:	Oral report on implementation of the policy regarding National Committees
Item 10:	Oral report on implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF
Item 11:	Oral report on implementation of policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures
Item 12:	Field visits of Executive Board members
Item 13:	Other matters
Item 14:	Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

212. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 67 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session.

213. In addition, 3 United Nations bodies, 2 specialized agencies, 14 NGOs, 3 National Committees for UNICEF and Palestine had submitted credentials.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Report of the Executive Director (Part II)

214. The Executive Board had before it the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part II)), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She explained that it reviewed major global trends and UNICEF programme activities, as well as issues of special interest to the Board. The report revealed the renewed focus of UNICEF on helping countries to meet their goals, focusing on the realities of the 1990s that influence UNICEF work in developing countries. She said that the report reviewed new opportunities for partnerships, including with the World Bank. The operating environment of the limited availability of financial resources, chronic poverty and increasing disparity also were noted. Moreover, she continued, the report reflected on how human rights conventions influenced programmes.

215. Many speakers welcomed the report and expressed appreciation to the Executive Director and the secretariat for their efforts in its preparation and for the work carried out by UNICEF during the past year. They said that the report was informative, comprehensive and well-organized. It clearly reflected the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF priority actions. Other delegations, however, remarked that the report was too general and descriptive. It should be more analytical and problem-oriented, and present a more forward-looking vision, especially in areas where UNICEF had a comparative advantage. One speaker suggested that future reports include qualitative indicators of organizational efficiency and effectiveness that could be tracked over time. The Executive Director said that the secretariat was constantly working to make the document as useful to Board members as possible.

216. One delegation expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding the relationship between the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council. In that connection, several speakers said that the guidance given by the Council to the United Nations funds and programmes should be improved, and that the issue would be pursued with the Council.

217. Many delegations shared the concerns outlined in the report regarding increasing poverty and growing disparities, the burden of external debt and reduced levels of official development assistance (ODA) at a time when the world economy was growing. Numerous speakers noted with satisfaction that UNICEF had actively sought new financial sources and encouraged donors to contribute additional resources to UNICEF. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation of UNICEF efforts in promoting the 20/20 Initiative. The Executive Director announced that there would be a presentation on the Initiative later in the session.

218. One speaker requested further clarification of UNICEF involvement in sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) and sector investment programmes (SIPs). The Director, Programme Division, explained some of the collaborative modalities, noting that SWAPs and SIPs were increasingly preferred by developing countries. They provided coherence to programme strategy, policy and implementation, and were being developed mostly in the social sectors. UNICEF was involved in the design and implementation of such programmes in several countries, mostly in Africa. The intention, he said, was to strengthen capacities of Governments to monitor public expenditure on basic social services.

219. Delegations welcomed the emphasis on the centrality of human rights and the introduction of a rights-based approach to programming. UNICEF was viewed

as the single most important advocate of child rights worldwide. A number of delegations requested information on how this new approach had affected country programming and UNICEF experience to date. The secretariat informed the Board that guidelines had only recently been issued and so it was too early to assess their impact, although a number of countries had already developed rights-based programmes. UNICEF also was interested in seeing this approach incorporated into UNDAF. The secretariat would be able to better inform the Board once the analysis of UNDAF and country annual reports was completed. One delegation requested information on cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. The secretariat informed the Board that a cooperation agreement had been signed recently with the Centre and that work was being closely coordinated. One speaker suggested that the secretariat include an item on the rights-based approach on the agenda of a future Board session.

220. Several delegations expressed support for the UNICEF approach to concentrating its assistance on those countries most in need, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa. With regard to Africa, they noted that while UNICEF had participated actively in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on an integrated strategy in Africa, this was not reflected in the report. UNICEF was encouraged to follow closely the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The Executive Director acknowledged that the report did not reflect the Secretary-General's comments as it was prepared before his report was completed. Another delegation also wanted UNICEF to follow-up on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. One delegation enquired whether the changes to the methods for allocation general resources did not contradict the statement that programme expenditure in the least developed countries had declined in 1997. The secretariat clarified that the modified allocation system for general resources would be implemented from 1999 onwards and would particularly favour the least developed countries.

221. Many delegations recognized the commitment of UNICEF to the United Nations reform process, especially to UNDAF at the field level. They noted with appreciation UNICEF efforts to ensure that children's rights were given a high priority in all United Nations activities. One speaker expressed the hope that Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would lead to increased coordination and a more constructive role for UNICEF. Several delegations requested information on the experience to date with UNDAF. The secretariat replied that UNDAF was currently being piloted in 19 countries and that this experience would be evaluated in the coming year. UNICEF was urged to continue its cooperation efforts both within the United Nations and with bilateral partners. One speaker expressed appreciation for the convening of the joint session with the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA) and hoped that such joint sessions would continue. UNICEF support of other areas within the reform process, such as the resident coordinator system and common premises, also was welcomed. With regard to the resident coordinator system, the secretariat said that there were ongoing discussions in the United Nations Development Group to make the selection more system-wide. Appreciation was expressed for the organization's internal management reform efforts, which dovetailed with United Nations reform efforts. The Executive Director stressed the importance of evaluations, especially to inform whether any course corrections were needed as well as to avoid duplication of efforts. She hoped that child rights would be integrated into activities.

222. The issue of children in need of special protection was raised by several speakers. They said that UNICEF should use a multisectoral approach in dealing with child labour, stressing the link between child labour and

education. One speaker expressed concern about the lack of reporting on drug trafficking and substance abuse, especially in view of their devastating consequences for children. The Executive Director informed the Board that UNICEF was sponsoring a panel involving youth during the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, which would be held the week after the present Board session. UNICEF work in demining activities was commended, and the problems of children affected by past nuclear tests were raised.

223. The prominence given to HIV/AIDS in the report, as well as UNICEF efforts, especially in the context of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), were commended by many speakers. One delegation stressed the need to consider carefully the link between breastfeeding and the vertical transmission of HIV. UNICEF was urged to take a leadership role with others in developing a suitable vaccine against HIV. The secretariat responded that, at present, the cost of pharmaceutical intervention was prohibitive. However, UNICEF and others have been talking to pharmaceutical companies to find ways to reduce prices.

224. Mention was made of the devastating consequences of malaria, and UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and others were commended for putting malaria high on their agendas. UNICEF was urged to collaborate even more closely with WHO in this area, especially in the search for an antimalarial vaccine. The Executive Director added that UNICEF would be participating in a consultation with WHO on malaria.

225. Delegations supported the emphasis on gender in UNICEF programmes as a cross-cutting issue. It was felt that education, especially of girls, was essential. The role of men also was mentioned by several speakers, who welcomed the fact that UNICEF was examining the issue. The Executive Director commented that UNICEF was increasingly aware of the importance of the role of men and that this concern was built into UNICEF programmes. She said that a working paper on this subject had been prepared for UNICEF staff and that it would be used to help shape future programme guidelines. She also brought to the attention of the Board a paper entitled "Men in Families".

226. Speakers addressing issues of coordination and cooperation expressed support for UNICEF recognition of the importance of National Committees, NGOs and civil society organizations in its work. Particular mention was made of its good collaboration with WHO and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and UNICEF was encouraged to further strengthen coordination with other agencies and institutions, including the World Bank and regional organizations, to avoid duplication. In response, the secretariat commented on the World Bank's collaborative participation in the social sector, especially in the areas of education, especially girls' education, and child labour, to name a few.

227. One speaker expressed concern about the lack of information in the report on UNICEF activities in emergency operations, and requested that it be included in future reports. The secretariat responded that a report on emergencies was submitted to the Board in 1997, and in accordance with decision 1997/7 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1), the next report would be presented to the Board in 2000.

228. A number of delegations welcomed the steps taken to strengthen monitoring and evaluation. One delegation requested more information on how lessons learned were integrated into programming. Another speaker said that UNICEF should make greater use of external, independent evaluations.

229. Many comments were made about the goals as well as the challenges facing UNICEF. Numerous speakers acknowledged that UNICEF had worked hard to achieve the World Summit for Children goals, and expressed appreciation for the organization's candour in admitting that all the goals would not be met. UNICEF was encouraged to focus its efforts on the neediest and to replicate examples of successful interventions. One speaker said that the international community must remain aware of the importance of basic social services for those most in need. The secretariat added that although all the goals would not be met, many countries were working very hard and were committed to improving the well-being of their children. One delegation requested that the secretariat keep the Board informed of its progress in developing the new agenda for children for the next century. The Executive Director agreed and said that this would be discussed in more detail at the 1999 annual session.

230. In addressing the meeting, the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) spoke about the lack of a joint working relationship between the two organizations. She mentioned the recommendation of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education, which met last year, that listed possible areas of focus of joint cooperation between the two organizations. However, since that time, no decision had been made. She requested a formal indication from UNICEF of the priority areas for joint UNESCO/UNICEF cooperation over the period mid-1998 to the year 2000. In order for the cooperation to be pragmatic, effective and realistic, both organizations also should try to be specific about the resources they planned to allocate or mobilize for the priority areas of cooperation. She expressed the hope that next year, they would be able to report on progress in the already substantial partnership between UNESCO and UNICEF, particularly at the field level, as well as in efforts towards strengthening the emphasis on quality basic education. In closing, she said that she hoped to be able to report such progress to UNESCO Executive Board, which had voiced some concern about this matter and had asked for a report at its next session in October 1998. The Executive Director replied that, at present, collaboration between the two organizations was very headquarters focused, and that UNICEF looked forward to working with UNESCO on more field-oriented projects.

B. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

231. The Director, Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning (EPP), introduced the "Progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children" (E/ICEF/1998/8). She said that the document provided a global overview on achievements, difficulties encountered and future actions needed. It emphasized the synergy of the World Summit goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Major efforts were required to accelerate progress towards the World Summit goals guided by principles such as the best interest of children and non-discrimination. She also shared information on the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) evaluation - its objectives, process, results, comparative advantages and impacts, as well as the use of MICS data. The evaluation suggests that MICS could be used in the future, suitably modified to monitor World Summit and other Convention indicators as they develop. To facilitate this assessment, a new MICS II version needed to be developed that would cover more indicators and be relevant to a larger number of countries; training activities needed to be organized; and additional resources were required for technical expertise and for the development of methodologies.

232. Many speakers complimented UNICEF on a more analytical and informative report. They emphasized the importance of the World Summit and its follow-up activities. A few speakers expressed their appreciation for the role UNICEF

has been playing in making progress towards the goals, while others voiced their concern about the areas that were lagging behind. Two delegations expected that greater emphasis would be placed on differences at the regional level. UNICEF was urged to use United Nations reform and the UNDAF process to accelerate work for children. Many delegations stressed the importance of inter-agency collaboration in accelerating progress towards the World Summit goals.

233. The linkage between the World Summit goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were supported by many speakers, and several supported the organization's increasing emphasis on human rights and child rights. The Convention was welcomed as a framework, and the guidelines on rights programming were thought to be useful. Several delegations suggested that UNICEF should increase support to countries to develop child rights indicators. Two speakers called for support to increase the membership of the Committee on the Rights of the Child from 10 to 18. In response, the secretariat reaffirmed the importance of indicators, especially those on child protection. Early this year, UNICEF had organised a child rights indicators meeting, involving UNICEF headquarters and field staff, academics, NGOs and other United Nations agencies. A report of the meeting would be shared at a later stage.

234. Most delegations urged UNICEF to take more focused action to accelerate progress towards the World Summit goals. Several speakers voiced their concern about the stagnation of immunization rates, adding that some achievements actually might have regressed. In this regard, UNICEF should continue to support local capacity-building to reach the goals in areas such as vaccine production. The secretariat said that UNICEF supported local capacity-building and the development of a second generation national programme of action to place children at the centre of national agendas and to enhance progress towards the World Summit goals and the realization of child rights.

235. The priority actions described in the document were supported by many speakers. It was suggested that priorities should be established based on what UNICEF itself would do and what it could persuade others to do. UNICEF should focus its priority actions where demonstrable results could be achieved and a real difference made for children in the remaining two years. Two delegations questioned the budgetary implications for UNICEF. One speaker asked what percentage of the goals could be reached in less than three year and the time-frame required for achieving the World Summit goals. Another speaker questioned the criteria used in country selection. The work towards defining an agenda for the organization's future work was supported. The secretariat informed delegations that the World Summit goals had been confirmed by subsequent international conferences, including ICPD, with extended time-frames. The criteria for selecting the short-term priorities included: countries with an under-five mortality rate over 70 per 1,000 live births; epidemiological considerations, such as malaria; the severity and extent of the problem at the country level; and countries that had a firm commitment and successful experience. Funding sources were mainly country-based funds, UNICEF resources and other funds.

236. Many delegations emphasized the importance of monitoring and assessment of progress, as well as data collection and usage. UNICEF was requested to increase its focus on involving local governments in monitoring progress and building their capacity, and UNICEF was complimented on developing the MICS methodology.

237. The importance of gender equality was stressed by several delegations, which added that the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women should be viewed in the same light as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and that more efforts should be given to ratifying the former. One speaker suggested that indicators should be developed to monitor the situation of gender equality. The secretariat expressed ongoing support for gender disaggregated data.

238. In view of the fact that there was also a follow-up report on ICPD being submitted to the Board at the present session, one speaker suggested that UNICEF should coordinate its reporting to the Board on the follow-up to international conferences. In reply, the secretariat expressed its strong support for integrated follow-up to international conferences.

239. Many delegations expressed concern about the decline in ODA and called on donor countries to increase their support to UNICEF. They also urged UNICEF to strengthen its resource mobilization efforts. One speaker wanted clarification on the involvement of UNICEF in the 20/20 Initiative. The secretariat said that UNICEF attached great importance to resource mobilization. With regard to the 20/20 Initiative, UNICEF was the lead United Nations agency in coordinating follow-up to the Initiative. Some 30 country studies were being undertaken which were building national capacity to monitor public expenditure on basic social services, and which would contribute to the global consultation on the subject in October this year in Hanoi, Viet Nam. In addition, the Director, EPP, mentioned that a presentation would be made on follow-up to the 20/20 Initiative immediately following the present session.

240. A few delegations expressed their satisfaction about the inclusion of progress on child protection issues. UNICEF was urged to develop indicators to monitor child protection issues. Another speaker expressed concern regarding the lack of coordination in addressing child protection issues. There was no mention of partners and what others were doing. The secretariat said that UNICEF had strengthened its collaboration with other United Nations agencies, such as with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Commissioner on Human Rights in the area of children in armed conflict, and with ILO and the World Bank on child labour.

241. Several speakers said that the end-decade review session in 2001 was very important, and they wanted to know the status of preparation for this event. One delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on the design of the 2001 session. Two delegations said that their countries, as initiating countries of the World Summit for Children in 1990, would work together with UNICEF in preparing for the end-decade review. In response, the secretariat expressed its appreciation for the commitment of the two initiating countries. UNICEF attached great importance to the 2001 session. A process of preparation for the end-decade review already had been set in motion within UNICEF. Up to now, a desk review of available documents had been conducted at headquarters, and regional focal points had been appointed. Consultations to review progress would be conducted at all levels, with the review at the national level being the most critical. The key challenges ahead were to measure progress and mobilize adequate resources. To adequately measure progress, an additional $20 million were required to cover the cost of development and implementation of a global assessment process. (See the annex, decisions 1998/12 and 1998/13, for the texts of the decisions adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

242. The Executive Director introduced the report on resource mobilization (E/ICEF/1998/11), highlighting the need for increased predictability, volume and more equitable sharing of the burden of financing UNICEF action on behalf of children. She thanked delegations for informal input to earlier discussions and noted that the document and the summary of these discussions would be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council. She encouraged members to share their views and feedback on issues and questions raised in intersessionals as their input would feed into the preparation of the outline for the resource mobilization strategy to be tabled at the September Board session and approved at the first regular session of 1999. In addition to the efforts of the Board, she noted that an intense effort was under way within the organization to improve the timeliness and quality of reporting, the management of resources at the country level, and the coordination of in-house actors responsible for different aspects of resource mobilization.

243. Several delegations welcomed the report and expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the concise, timely and well-focused approach taken in the document.

244. There was broad-based consensus around the need to increase the volume and predictability of the resource base for UNICEF. This was seen as an objective not only in the context of facilitating the planning and management of UNICEF actions in the field, but also as part of a system-wide issue for all the funds and programmes. There were several references to the need for a significant revival of political will in favour of the multilateral system, and a number of delegations said that they wanted to see a more equitable distribution of the financial burden relating to the core budget. The latter issues were fundamental to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of fund-raising efforts by UNICEF and other funds and programmes.

245. Responding to questions from the Executive Director regarding what the organization itself could do to enlist donor support, three factors emerged. Firstly, the overriding majority of speakers cited the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of programmes as being the determining factor in resource mobilization. Secondly, major donors highlighted the importance they assigned to being able to "demonstrate development impact" - through better reports, more effective public communication and improved financial systems aimed at addressing accountability issues. Finally, a number of delegations felt that innovation and sustainability were tantamount to captivating new interest and retaining existing donors.

246. Many delegations agreed on the need to quantify programme needs as a basis for funding targets. Their caveat was simply that targets be set realistically, that priorities be articulated and that UNICEF be able to communicate not only the potential impact of new resources in programmatic terms, but also the detrimental effects of not receiving the requisite resources. Several delegations commended the Executive Director for the initiative taken to prioritize and target the actions required from 1998 to the year 2000 in an effort to achieve the end-of-the-decade World Summit goals. Other speakers were interested in further details about the process in place to develop the discussion of the Agenda for Children Beyond the Year 2000. Both initiatives were seen as valuable strategic components in the development of a resource mobilization strategy. Several donor Governments highlighted the increasing interest in and value of expressing programme needs in thematic terms and the growing prospects for funding of that nature, but noted that flexibility and institutional capacity would be needed for programming, presenting and managing resources accordingly.

247. The heart of the discussion centred around mechanisms that would allow the issues of programme targets to be addressed in the same context with adequate, more predictable and equitably shared contributions. In this regard, one delegation proposed that programme targets and administrative budgets be consolidated over a three-year, forward-looking, rolling cycle and presented to the Board for review. At the same time, delegations would be expected to make three-year commitments or indicative pledges, thus allowing the Board itself to link the approval of programme needs with a plan for obtaining resources to carry them out. A number of the major donors to UNICEF expressed support for this proposal, especially the concept of linking programme planning levels with resource commitments. Some donors were able to commit to the idea of multi-year pledges, while others could only agree to providing indicative planning levels beyond one year.

248. Beyond the pledging process, other mechanisms that had been proposed by the Executive Director in earlier discussions with the Board were referred to in interventions and included the following:

(a) Payment of core funding pledged amount early in the UNICEF fiscal year: almost all donors agreed;

(b) Payment of pledged amounts according to an agreed schedule: this would not be a problem, but in fact, it might not be necessary in many cases as most could agree to pay the full contribution early in the fiscal year;

(c) Agreement to a minimum floor of core contribution: for one or two donors, this was acceptable, while for others it was desirable but impossible since for them it changed the voluntary nature of the pledge and/or more simply their budgeting systems would not allow it;

(d) Payment in United States dollars: this was generally not accepted, although the Executive Director later clarified that the issue was not so much payment in United States dollars as seeking a mechanism that would lead to the reduction of exposure to exchange risks.

249. Most delegations devoted at least part of their statements to the issue of sources of funding. There was considerable positive feedback and encouragement in response to the question as to whether UNICEF should, in fact, seek closer collaboration and financing with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and regional banks. It was generally felt that as long as the Board was playing a key role in programmes and policy, and UNICEF itself was faithful to its mandate, there was little risk of altering the character of the organization in any significant way. One delegation cautioned against UNICEF becoming an implementing agent of the international financial institutions.

250. Similarly, the Executive Director was encouraged by many delegations to pursue policy dialogue and funding efforts with the European Union. Several delegations offered their support.

251. The important role of the private sector in the bigger picture of funding sources with growth potential was highlighted by a number of delegations. Several speakers underlined the potential for increasing the levels of private sector funding; however, it was felt that this should keep pace with rather than replace growth from theGovernment side. Many speakers hastened to add, nevertheless, that approximately one third share of the burden now borne by the private sector should not be exceeded significantly if UNICEF was to remain essentially an intergovernmental body. The National Committees themselves underlined the importance of timely and quality

reporting, flexibility to move adaptly into thematic funding modalities, the importance of setting priorities and the urgency in issuing guidelines for corporate fund-raising. The Chairman of the Standing Group on National Committees suggested that National Committees could, in fact, commit a fixed proportion of their income to general resources on a multi-year basis.

252. Funding sources at the country level were mentioned briefly by a few delegations. Some speakers felt that private sector and corporate fund-raising opportunities could be further developed in some developing countries. One donor Government noted that the decentralized decision-making of a number of government donors presented an opportunity for UNICEF staff at the country level to have outreach, involve bilaterals in policy planning and dialogue with Government, and integrate plans more fully with partners on the ground. The implication of donor Government decentralization also would ultimately require increased diligence in contribution management at the country level which, hopefully, the new field office software would address.

253. Two delegations from developing countries noted the potential to enhance the financial resource base with donations-in-kind and human resources.

254. Several speakers from recipient countries raised concerns about the need to address the low response rate to emergency appeals, although one did not want emergency funding to detract from development action. A third delegation highlighted the persistent needs of countries in transition which repeatedly fell in the gap between development and emergency.

255. The Executive Director expressed appreciation to delegations for their comments and particularly their specificity. The secretariat, she said, had taken note of the strong emphasis on the importance to donors of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of programmes with demonstrable results. It was underlined that everyone in UNICEF played a role in fund-raising, that the secretariat was very conscious of the decentralization of donor decision-making, that National Committees played a key role and, acknowledging this reality, UNICEF was trying to work even more closely with them.

256. Furthermore, it was noted that as UNICEF moved into new markets with different kinds of customers, it was required to tailor its efforts differently. Hence, customer relations was assuming increasing importance. This meant decreasing the bureaucracy and streamlining processes with the objective of increasing efficiency.

257. To some extent, the issue of burden share was being addressed in the diversification away from traditional donors to new corporate and private sector donors, with Change for Good, Caran d'ache, Flic Flac and Merck cited as examples. Corporate relationships at the country level also were developing, and partnerships with service organizations such as Rotary International and Kiwanis were being reinforced.

258. Responding to questions on the flex-team on resource mobilization, delegations were advised that it had been transformed into an interdivisional working group on resource mobilization of concerned division heads. It would meet regularly to address issues raised by the team as well as ongoing cross-cutting themes such as developing the relationship with the European Union, emergency fund-raising and using the Internet as a fund-raising vehicle. (See the annex, decision 1998/8, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. UNICEF communication policy

259. The Director of the Division of Communication (DOC) introduced the report on the "UNICEF communication policy" (E/ICEF/1998/10), noting that much of the success of UNICEF over the past 50 years was attributable to the effective use of communication to promote the issues and concerns of children. From its earliest days, communication played a central place in the work of UNICEF. Because of the need to raise funds and because communication was an essential part of programme delivery, UNICEF had to explain its work to donors effectively and convincingly. As a result of this long experience and investment in communication, UNICEF had accumulated a wealth of knowledge and unique network of communication staff in field offices and National Committees. The Director, DOC, said that the Executive Board's request for a statement on the UNICEF communication policy had come at an opportune time. Rapid advances in technology, the move towards globalization of the media and the shift to programming for children's rights required UNICEF to establish a coherent communication framework that reflected organizational goals and ways to achieve them. He pointed out that the report resulted from a consultation process that had involved staff throughout the organization, as well as input from external experts.

260. Delegations expressed appreciation for the complete and comprehensive nature of the report, the clear elaboration of goals and strategies in communication that it contained, and its usefulness as a framework to guide the work of the organization in this area. Several delegations welcomed the clear definitions of accountabilities in communication at country, regional and global levels, and the intention of the secretariat to develop a human resources strategy for communication staff.

261. In their interventions, many delegations stressed the vital role that communication played in reaching programme goals, and urged UNICEF to continue to find ways to integrate communication into programme activities.

262. Several delegations commended the strategy of focusing on partnerships with the media, including audio-visual and print co-productions, rather than relying on in-house production and dissemination to get the organization's messages to target audiences.

263. One speaker asked what steps the secretariat was taking to produce information products in languages other than English, French and Spanish. In reply, the Director, DOC, pointed out that the decentralized nature of communication activities meant that many field offices and National Committees adapted and translated material produced centrally for local needs. As examples, he pointed to The State of the World's Children report, which is translated into more that 40 languages each year, and the Facts for Life publication, which has been translated into 215 languages.

264. Several delegations linked the communication policy paper to the earlier discussion on resource mobilization and stressed the central role of communication in fund-raising. They requested that steps be taken to ensure that the potential contribution of communication to fund-raising efforts was tapped and support given to National Committees in this area. The Director, DOC, agreed that this was an important area of activity, as stressed in the report. DOC maintained close links with the Private Sector Division (PSD) and had a programme to produce fund-raising materials.

265. One delegation emphasized the need to ensure that all communication materials and channels were culturally relevant and appropriate for the needs of target audiences. In this regard, a number of delegations pointed out that

while the Internet was becoming a major communication medium in industrialized countries and provided an inexpensive way to disseminate information to target audiences, access in the developing world was limited and likely to remain so for some time. The Director, DOC, acknowledged this fact and admitted that balancing the question of equitable access to modern media and the financial investment the organization should make in them remained a challenge and was under constant review.

266. One delegation questioned whether the communication policy adequately set out the communication priorities of UNICEF and how, in a period of limited resources, the organization would choose between them. The secretariat responded that the priorities of UNICEF in communication would follow those of the organization as a whole. At the country level, these priorities were set out as part of the country programming process.

267. In response to a suggestion that UNICEF should consider developing a communication manual to help guide country office staff in their work, the Director, DOC, said that a UNICEF Information Manual had been issued four years ago. It was currently being revised and would be issued as a more comprehensive Communication Manual in early 1999. (See the annex, decision 1998/9, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

268. The Director of Change Management introduced the two reports being presented to the Executive Board on the results of management excellence to date. The first document provided an update of the organization of UNICEF (E/ICEF/Organization/Rev.3), last presented to the Board in 1993, reflecting adjustments made to the accountabilities of country representatives, and regional and headquarters directors. The second document, entitled "Positioning UNICEF for the twenty-first century: the impact of management excellence, 1995-1998" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.5), provided an assessment of the key measures undertaken at country, regional and headquarters locations that have improved the overall efficiency and effectiveness of UNICEF-assisted programmes of cooperation.

269. In her presentation, the Director described how Management Excellence Programme (MEP) interventions had created the conditions necessary to strengthen UNICEF-assisted programmes through improved planning and decision-making processes; clearly defined accountabilities; updated information systems and management tools; increased access to information and knowledge; more efficient work processes; and new regional mechanisms, such as regional management teams (RMTs). She also spoke of parallel efforts being made to strengthen the organisation's overall performance management system to monitor implementation of the medium-term plan (MTP) for 1998-2001. She assured members of the Board that efforts would continue over the next year to pursue excellence in priority areas such as implementation of management information systems, the development of programme knowledge networks, the development of a career management system as well as the revitalization of resource mobilization strategies to leverage resources for children. In closing, she attributed the achievements of MEP to the intensive investment of time and energy of UNICEF staff, and commended staff members on their remarkable commitment to change despite the challenges that arose along the way.

270. The UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia spoke about experiences in his region and the role of both the regional office and the RMT in supporting and monitoring UNICEF-assisted programmes and in contributing to the global policy. The RMT, comprised of the country representatives, the Regional Director, some senior staff in the Regional Office and representative of the

staff associations, meets regularly to review progress and decide on priorities, guided by a detailed regional work plan prepared at the beginning of the year. He also provided a concrete example of the country programme recommendation (CPR) preparation process, emphasizing its highly participatory nature. The Regional Director explained how indicators for both management and programme performance had been developed and how progress was reviewed regularly at RMT meetings. In conclusion, he said that the process of "regionalization" had improved programme quality and output, had made it possible for UNICEF to meet new challenges, and was resulting in better assisted programmes for children and women in South Asia.

271. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the thorough review of the implementation and impact of MEP, with several speakers thanking the secretariat for the comprehensive, well-structured reports and commending the leadership of top management and staff participation for the success of MEP. The UNICEF staff were also congratulated for their commitment to change, a process which called for innovation, flexibility and hard work. Another speaker expressed appreciation for the dialogue between the Executive Board and the secretariat throughout the course of MEP which gave Board members a true feeling of ownership.

272. A number of Board members expressed their satisfaction with results achieved in management excellence, stating that reforms identified three years ago had indeed been implemented. Specific reference was made to the enhanced capacities of UNICEF to manage resources and the strengthened accountability for results. Given the achievements of MEP, one delegation emphasized the need for a communication strategy to build awareness of UNICEF as a transparent, effective organisation for children as a means of increasing awareness of the results of contributions made to UNICEF.

273. Delegations commented on the tangible results of MEP, with one speaker referring to the accomplishments as the end of the first phase of change, which positioned UNICEF well for the next phase - the year 2000 review and the launching of a new global agenda for children.

274. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the redistribution of functions and skills among country, regional and headquarters offices. However, concern was expressed by one speaker about whether the use of management teams had affected the direction and control required by the organization to ensure implementation of results emerging from team work.

275. Three Board members recalled that their visits to UNICEF country offices had confirmed the positive impact of MEP in the field. They found that the elements of change were indeed in place and that the decentralization of procedures was working well. Another speaker pointed to increased Government involvement in programme review activities and improvements made in the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF operations within the country.

276. One delegation inquired about the relationship between the country programme management plan (CPMP), the country note and UNDAF. The Director, Change Management, explained the purposes and linkages between each of the three processes. She provided a recent example of how the preparation of the CPMP by the UNICEF India office had ensured that the necessary resources and systems would be in place to support the successful achievement of the programme objectives listed in the new CPR to be presented to the Board for approval in September. The UNICEF Representative for Colombia also responded by illustrating how MEP had contributed to the enrichment of programmes and

increased collaboration within the United Nations country team in promoting peace and children's rights.

277. Regional offices were commended for improvements in strategic planning, budget clearance processes and improved oversight of country offices. Specific reference was made to the role played by the Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States in concluding a three-party agreement between the Government, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and UNICEF to achieve greater effectiveness in actions for children. The intervention made by the Regional Director for South Asia also was viewed as a role model for the coordination of United Nations agencies at the regional level. In response to a query about the application of regional priorities, the Regional Director for South Asia explained how regional priorities were identified and used to improve effectiveness.

278. Several comments were made with regard to improvements at headquarters. The renewal of the Programme Group was highlighted by one delegation as being a positive step.

279. Several speakers commented on UNICEF achievements in strengthening information technology systems. The Executive Director informed delegations that a report on information technology management would be presented to the Board in 1999 and offered the possibility of having an intersessional discussion on information technology management if Board members wanted an opportunity to discuss it prior to the session.

280. One delegation expressed disappointment with the decision not to relocate PSD to Europe, stating that he still believed the division should be located as close as possible to its most important market, and requested that UNICEF reconsider its decision.

281. One speaker inquired about progress in the area of human resources management, while another speaker suggested that local capacities be considered more in the context of the UNICEF career management system. The Director, Change Management, said that the development and implementation of a career management system was a priority area for the coming year. She described progress in human resources management as being achieved through: decentralizing accountability for effective human resources management to all managers and chiefs of section; investments in training in management skills; the introduction of new mechanisms allowing for staff/management dialogue; the participation of staff representatives on office management teams; and increased attention to performance appraisals as well as to appraisals of supervisors.

282. The Executive Director added that human resources management and career management were high priorities for UNICEF. She spoke of staff morale as having undergone both improvements and decline throughout the course of MMP due to the anxiety created by change and the untimeliness of having to deal with a tighter budget. She looked forward to continuing dialogue with the Board on these issues and on progress with the career management system.

283. One speaker conveyed his Governments confidence that UNICEF was getting the best returns on resources used. Another speaker stressed the need for indicators to be developed allowing the Board to appreciate how effectively and efficiently UNICEF used its resources. The Director, Change Management, described how UNICEF measured and reported on efficiency and effectiveness gains and reminded delegations that a consolidated analysis of efficiency gains was presented to the Board in the biennium budget submissions. She

provided examples of regional initiatives to improve performance monitoring and highlighted steps being taken to strengthen the overall performance of the UNICEF management system to be reflected in the MTP for 1998-2001.

284. After having MEP reports discussed at every session of the Executive Board for the past three years, a number of delegations expressed the view that it was time to end follow-up of MEP as a specific agenda item, with a few suggesting that the issue could be revisited in a few years. Issues for future feedback identified by speakers included a review of how UNICEF offices have adjusted to new roles and instruments, and the development of evaluation mechanisms to assist the Board in monitoring management excellence to assure high standards. The meeting ended with a presentation by the Senior Auditor, which highlighted ideas currently being discussed within UNICEF on how to strengthen performance management systems to better plan for and demonstrate results of UNICEF activities. (See the annex, decision 1998/11, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

Oral report on the outcome of the work of the "Group of Volunteers" on relations between the Executive Board and the secretariat

285. At its third regular session of 1997, the Executive Board had reviewed proposed guidelines for an effective partnership between the Executive Board and the secretariat (E/ICEF/1997/AB/L.13), which had been prepared by a so-called "Group of Volunteers" composed of members of the Executive Board. In decision 1997/29, the Board had decided to revisit the issue no later than the 1998 annual session.

286. The representative of Switzerland said that the Group, initially composed of five individual members, had initiated the exercise two years ago to bring clarity to the relationship between the Board and the secretariat. Following the decision taken in September 1997, the Group had organized an open-ended informal consultation on 17 October 1997, at which delegations had been invited to comment on the proposed guidelines. Six delegations had done so. The Group decided not to continue the exercise and had not prepared new draft guidelines for the following reasons: (a) they found that they repeatedly had to explain the historical context of the exercise to new members of the Board; (b) they had been unable to find the time to review and amend the guidelines and organize another informal consultation; and (c) they realised that, to a large extent, the guidelines were being applied by the secretariat. Today, the Group had nothing to offer beyond the original proposed guidelines.

287. He believed, however, that the guidelines were basically good ones that could support effective Board-secretariat collaboration even without their formal endorsement by the Board. They could be useful as they provided a clear and effective division of labour. Their usefulness was demonstrated further by the fact that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board was trying to develop a similar division of labour.

F. Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development

288. The report on the follow-up to ICPD (E/ICEF/1998/9), prepared in response to decision 1995/29 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), was introduced by the Director, Programme Division. Highlighting UNICEF achievements in operationalising the ICPD goals and objectives, he emphasized that the goals mandatedthe UNICEF agenda for action to protect the health and well-being of women and children. They were guided by the UNICEF rights perspective and implemented within the country programme approach in a coordinated and

integrated manner. Although UNICEF does not have a separate programme or budget for ICPD follow-up, most of what UNICEF does as an organization, both in spirit and in practice, is in line with the ICPD Programme of Action.

289. He also emphasized the close collaboration that exists between UNICEF and its sister agencies, particularly WHO, and as exemplified in several inter-agency models such as the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health and UNDAF in implementing programmes. UNICEF country programmes were strengthened through partnerships with United Nations agencies, Governments, donors, bilateral and multilateral organisations, NGOs and civil societies.

290. Most delegations welcomed the multisectoral and problem-solving approach of UNICEF to implementing programmes, noting that UNICEF had made significant progress. Many speakers appreciated the efforts in strengthening partnerships and were interested to know how UNICEF contributed to UNDAF and how it collaborated at the country level with UNFPA. Speakers recommended the development of South-South programmes for strengthening midwifery services. An observer delegation informed the meeting that the International Paediatric Association and the Federation of International Gynaecologists and Obstetricians was planning a discussion on the integration of safe motherhood and invited UNICEF to participate.

291. Many speakers agreed with the priority areas for UNICEF follow-up and felt that UNICEF also played a major role in promoting vitamin A supplementation, tackling the problem of HIV/AIDS, and ending female genital mutilation and violence against women. Speakers were informed that UNICEF was pleased about the findings from vitamin A studies and that an informal discussion on the findings, hosted by WHO, would be held in late 1998. Donors and Governments would be welcome to participate.

292. The alarming increase in HIV/AIDS infection in India, South Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa was noted with concern, and questions were raised about the UNICEF strategy for tackling this problem and how the breastfeeding strategy was handled in resource poor countries. A Board member circulated a "Memorandum for an International Therapeutic Solidarity" on HIV/AIDS and requested that UNICEF provide a position on it. The secretariat informed delegations that WHO, UNICEF and other co-sponsors of UNAIDS were working together on an approach to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and were in the early stages of developing guidelines. As a preliminary step, efforts to reduce mother-to-child transmission would be implemented on a limited scale to determine the constraints, the actual costs involved and the effectiveness of these interventions.

293. Speakers appreciated the inclusion of successful programme experiences, for instance, in Cameroon and Uganda, on promoting education, and recommended their duplication and expansion into other regions and parts of the world.

294. Questions were raised about the role of UNICEF in family planning and reproductive health. Some speakers recommended that UNICEF take a more active role in promoting family planning as a method of child spacing. Another delegation commented that UNICEF should abide by the mandate approved by the Board and asked if there had been a policy change. Delegations were informed that the UNICEF policy on family planning remained unchranged.

295. Some speakers said that UNICEF also should focus on the role of men. The Director, Programme Division, informed that UNICEF was very supportive of this and announced the formation of an Interdivisional Working Group on the Role of Men in Families to enhance the role of men in improving the lives of women and children.

296. A statement by the NGO Working Group on Girls was presented by the International Federation of the University of Women, which urged UNICEF to keep the holistic development of girls and empowerment central to its programmes.

297. In response to questions of monitoring using process indicators, speakers were informed that process indicators developed in collaboration with WHO and UNFPA were being used to monitor programmes in Bangladesh, Egypt and Mali.

298. Numerous delegations expressed keen interest in UNICEF activities in relation to Cairo Plus Five. They were informed that UNICEF would continue to be an active participant. UNICEF had participated in the recent Round Table on Adolescent Health and would be participating in other round tables and the International Forum in Amsterdam in 1999. (See the annex, decision 1998/10, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. Oral report on implementation of the policy regarding National Committees

299. The Director of the Regional Office for Europe presented an oral report on implementation of the policy regarding National Committees for UNICEF, as requested by Executive Board decision 1996/33 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1). The four governing principles of the new policy were recapitulated: (a) that National Committees should develop a closer relationship with UNICEF; (b) that UNICEF support to National Committees should be located in the Regional Office for Europe in Geneva; (c) that accountability must be improved, for which key performance indicators need to be developed; and (d) that the development of a closer relationship with National Committees must be achieved through team-building processes without prejudicing their autonomy. The Director then described the reported achievements in each one of the above-mentioned areas.

300. He spoke about the design of a joint planning process for resource mobilization with the Standing Group of National Committees. The review process of the recognition agreement had begun to reflect the new relationship, and the complex issue of improving reporting to National Committees on UNICEF activities in the field had been given increased attention. He reported that a specific website for National Committees on the Internet had been created, with immediate tangible results.

301. Delegations commented positively on the improved relationship between National Committees and the UNICEF secretariat through the effective coordinating efforts of the Regional Office for Europe in Geneva. They stated that the National Committees played an important role in their respective countries and were, in fact, representing UNICEF in the industrialized world. They also played a key role in making the Convention on the Rights of the Child known and better implemented in those countries, while making important contributions to the overall income of UNICEF. One speaker cautioned that, in advocacy work on the Convention, the National Committees should be guided by the UNICEF secretariat and not be ahead of it.

302. Some delegations stressed the fact that the test of achieving a successful joint planning process was still to come, and the development of key performance indicators was important for both National Committees and the UNICEF secretariat. The need for better reporting by the secretariat on the use of funds in the field to enhance further capacity for future fund-raising also was emphasized. Several speakers mentioned that it was too soon to judge the results of the PSD restructuring. The Regional Director replied that key

performance indicators would be developed for both sides to assess performance and that the secretariat needed to improve dramatically its reporting on the use of funds.

303. A delegation also commented on the importance of a good relationship between the National Committees and the Governments, and described in some detail the very close collaboration in his own country.

304. One speaker emphasized that whereas the contributions of National Committees were very much appreciated, the overall burden and responsibility for financing UNICEF and its programmes should remain with the Governments. The contributions of National Committees should remain supplementary.

305. The need for ensuring that the planning process would be implemented effectively and that the proper staff was on board in the Geneva Office was stressed. The Regional Director assured delegations that the planning process was firmly under way and that seven National Committees were involved in joint planning with UNICEF.

306. The Executive Director emphasized the extraordinary and important role that National Committees played not only in fund-raising, but also as educators and communicators, and that much needed to be done in industrialized countries to raise consciousness about the problems of children and women in developing countries.

UNICEF cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society

307. The Director, Programme Division, presented an oral report on UNICEF cooperation with NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) as agreed at the September 1997 Board session. His presentation focused on four major areas: global collaboration; collaboration at the country level; institutional arrangement; and CSOs/NGOs and United Nations reform.

308. The partnerships, spanning from global to local levels, included NGOs in the traditional sense and also civic associations, community-based organizations, small indigenous grass-roots groups, women's cooperatives, associations of elders, the independent media, human rights organizations, mayors' associations and organizations of local authorities. Out of these partnerships had come an extraordinary level of social mobilization, advocacy and concrete action at global, regional and country levels on behalf of children, sparked by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

309. The forging of strategic alliances with international NGOs was imperative for UNICEF since many of the problems confronting children today have regional or global causes, and some abuses of children's rights, such as child trafficking and sexual exploitation, are transnational in character. The active collaboration of UNICEF with NGOs also has been vital in preparations for and follow-up to recent international conferences. UNICEF consults regularly with NGOs on the development of new policies, strategies and programmes, and seeks their involvement in the implementation of global initiatives.

310. Collaboration at the national level has been pivotal in enhancing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of country programmes, although the scope of collaboration varies considerably. In every country, collaboration takes place within the framework of the Basic Cooperation Agreement,

programming procedures, administrative procedures, and financial rules and regulations.

311. UNICEF country offices encourage NGOs and CSOs to participate in the promotion and protection of child rights. In many countries, key NGOs and CSOs are involved increasingly in the preparation stages of the country programme.

312. UNICEF is one of the few United Nations agencies that has formalized the participation of NGOs in its governing body. Since the early 1950s, UNICEF has been granting consultative status to international development NGOs that already hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, engage in child-related activities and wish to formalize their relationship with UNICEF. In keeping with Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 on the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs, UNICEF will implement procedures reflecting its spirit and intent.

313. The Executive Director stressed the importance of the role of civil society. She said that civil society was a growth industry for UNICEF and that the organization's increasing involvement with civil society necessitated the capacity-building of civil society institutions.

H. Oral report on implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF

314. In endorsing the "Implementation plan of the health strategy for UNICEF" as contained in document E/ICEF/1997/3, the Executive Board requested that a report on progress made in its implementation be submitted at the present session (decision 1997/9). In his report, the Chief of the Health Section, Programme Division, highlighted the three broad and interrelated areas upon which UNICEF country-level support has concentrated during the past two years: (a) direct support for priority actions that make an immediate impact on improving health or preventing disease; (b) support to strengthen health systems; and (c) advocacy to improve health, based on monitoring and analysis.

315. Delegations welcomed the comprehensiveness of the report and its emphasis on intersectoral work with nutrition and sanitation, advocacy, capacity-building of local institutions and systems, and partnerships. UNICEF was commended for the concrete impact of its efforts in health and their renewal through the identification of programme priorities for 1998-2000. To better target its programmes, UNICEF was encouraged to develop a country typology based on the successful banding strategy developed by UNICEF and WHO for vaccine financing.

316. While UNICEF was commended for its involvement as a children's advocate in health sector reforms, it was considered that programme funding for priority actions making an immediate impact on improving health or preventing disease should be maintained at high levels. In particular, UNICEF was encouraged to continue to support the control of diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, malaria and measles; supplementation of vitamin A; and the eradication of poliomyelitis and dracunculiasis. Appreciation also was expressed for the organization's commitment to the health and development of young people.

317. Responding to concerns raised about the sustainability of the Bamako Initiative, a key strategy to the strengthening of the health systems, the Regional Director for West and Central Africa provided a regional overview of implementation of the Initiative. She stressed the necessity of adapting the approach to each country and the importance of inter-agency partnership, and highlighted some remaining challenges such as vaccine supply and distribution,

and cold-chain equipment and maintenance. She also underlined the issue of community participation as being at the core of any efforts aiming at sustainability.

I. Oral report on implementation of policies and strategies on children in need of special protection

318. The oral report on implementation of the UNICEF policy on children in need of special protection measures, and the accompanying conference room paper (CRP) (E/ICEF/1998/CRP.11), were presented by the Deputy Director, Programme Division. The CRP was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1997/21 and provides an overview of progress in the area of child protection. Focusing on the integration of protection issues with UNICEF country programmes, it highlights prevention and targeted responses, capacity-building, relevant partnerships and information gathering.

319. Many delegations intervened on this agenda item. There was broad support for activities in the area of child protection where UNICEF was breaking new ground. Several delegations expressed their satisfaction with the report, and welcomed the efforts under way at country, regional and global levels to address, and especially to mainstream, these issues. The importance of child protection issues as core elements of UNICEF programmes was highlighted, along with the need for enhanced organizational capacity. In this regard, delegations welcomed recent steps to recruit additional regional advisers and the appointment of a chief of section at headquarters.

320. With regard to specific issues of concern, several delegations noted progress with regard to child labour, the impact of armed conflict on children and childhood disability. There was broad support for the capacity-building initiatives under way, as well as the further strengthening of strategic partnerships with United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the Special Rapporteur as well as NGOs. However, one delegation urged UNICEF to pay greater attention to the situation of instituionalized children.

321. Given the complexities of the various protection issues and remaining gaps in terms of appropriate data and monitoring tools, a number of speakers requested the secretariat to give increased priority to information gathering and the development of an appropriate knowledge base with accompanying programming tools. Delegations also called for more detailed information on country-level activities addressing protection issues, and it was proposed that the secretariat provide reports on policy implementation every two years.

322. The Deputy Director welcomed the many interventions made by delegations and the Board's strong support and continuing interest in these issues. In this regard, she pointed out that historically, the involvement of the Executive Board had been crucial to UNICEF embracing issues related to children trapped in extremely difficult circumstances, starting in 1984 and leading to subsequent policy decisions in 1986, 1996 and 1997. The present debate, she noted, further highlighted this interest, which would strengthen further efforts by the secretariat to strengthen capacity, develop a better understanding, and provide enhanced support to regional and country offices as protection concerns were mainstreamed further with an emphasis on preventive strategies.

J. Field visits of Executive Board members

323. The combined report of the two field visits of Executive Board members to Guinea and Mali (16-28 February 1998) and Bangladesh (12-26 February 1998) (E/ICEF/1998/CRP.10) was introduced by two representatives of the teams.

324. The teams expressed their appreciation for these very informative visits, which gave them an opportunity to appraise the situation of women and children in programme countries and to see first-hand the many aspects of UNICEF field operations. One of the presenters highlighted the usefulness of the field trip at an early stage of membership on the Executive Board as it enabled a better understanding of the needs in the field and a better understanding of country programmes. Both teams were impressed by the effective UNICEF work in the field; its good relations with the host Governments and other partners, particularly other United Nations agencies; and the dedication of its staff.

325. In the ensuing debate, one speaker congratulated UNICEF for the effective implementation of MEP in the field and for its constructive participation in the UNDAF exercises along with other United Nations agencies in the pilot countries. He expressed satisfaction with the good relations between UNICEF and other partners, but cautioned against the possibility of UNICEF field offices becoming only an executing agency for other institutions. He also expressed concern about the risk of confusing the roles of UNICEF and host Governments in programme activities. UNICEF, he said, should help Governments assume their roles by helping them to strengthen their capacities.

326. Another speaker noted the positive involvement of communities in all programme activities and government ownership of programmes. He also was pleased to note the good relations among UNICEF and the Governments and NGOs.

K. Statement by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

327. As is usual practice at the annual session of the Board, the President of the Board invited the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association (GSA) to address the meeting. She expressed her appreciation for the Board's continued support and interest in the welfare of UNICEF staff world-wide. She was happy to report that progress had been made in relations between managerial and non-managerial staff. She also reported briefly on the annual session of the United Nations Staff Management Coordinating Committee, held in Bangkok, at which she delivered a position paper in her capacity as Chairperson of the GSA.

L. Presentation of the 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

328. The President and the Executive Director made brief statements as the 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award was presented to the Pacific Regional Human Rights Education Resource Team (RRRT) in recognition for its exceptional work in improving the legal and social status of children and women in the Pacific region. Mr. Kim Stanford-Smith, Director, accepted the Award on behalf of RRRT.

M. Other matters

329. The Chief of the Office of the Executive Director spoke to the Executive Board about his recent participation in the United Nations team that had successfully negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan. He explained the context of the negotiations, which was the breakdown of conditions of work of United Nations staff working in the country. The Taliban also had a clear policy of discrimination in education and health, and because of this, since 1995 UNICEF had suspended its support to formal education where such discrimination was practised. Finally, there had been a blockade to humanitarian assistance in several areas, resulting in a joint United Nations decision to suspend activities in one area and to close offices there temporarily.

330. Prior to the mission, the Inter-Agency Steering Committee agreed to take a common position and to have a 'principled approach'. The UNICEF Executive Director had visited Afghanistan in April to underline the common United Nations position and stress the Organisation's desire to move forward, throug a dialogue, in order to help the people of Afghanistan.

331. He described the composition of the negotiating team, and said that despite the difficult negotiatioons, progress was made on all points. The Taliban agreed to allow universal access to Central Afghanistan for the delivery of food; there was clear acceptance in writing of the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff; there was agreement in writing on the need and right of women and girls to education and health, specifying the need for equal access and mentioning specific milestones, including the construction of a certain number of schools and improved health facilities, to allow separate but equal access to girls and women; and a process was under way to resolve the issue of the Mahram edict. The next steps of the process would involve a resumption of activities in one area, which was being implemented, and work on specific details for education and health. Once the steps to be taken in education were clear and progress had begun, UNICEF would review its policy regarding support to education.

332. Several important lessons had been learned from the process: having a clear mandate, with defined principles and objectives, and the authority to make decisions, made the negotiations easier; and being able to cooperate and speak with one voice provided a successful example of what the United Nations could accomplish.

333. The President said that presentation had reminded the Executive Board of the importance of the role of UNICEF in the wider United Nations family.

334. Referring to the upcoming Special Session of the General Assembly on drugs, a speaker asked about UNICEF cooperation with the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in Afghanistan. The Chief of the Office of the Executive Director said that UNDCP was part of the United Nations team in Afghanistan, which was based in Islamabad. UNDCP was working to shift populations from reliance on opium production to other economic activities. This concerned women, especially in rural areas, even if they were not involved in the work force to the same degree as in other regions. UNICEF would work with UNDCP on this issue.

N. Closing of the session

335. The Deputy Executive Director spoke on behalf of the Executive Director. She said that while all Executive Board sessions were important, the annual session had extra significance because of the wide participation of delegations from capitals and National Committees. The Board had achieved much during the session to move the work of UNICEF forward. In particular, the discussions and decision on the follow-up to the World Summit for Children had given the necessary guidance on completing the World Summit's agenda and linking this work to the priorities for the next century. The discussions on the UNICEF health strategy, follow-up to ICPD and the policy on children in need of special protection also provided important guidance. Resource mobilisation was perhaps the most important subject discussed during the session, and the Board's comments would be fed into the draft strategy that was under preparation. As for management excellence, after two and one half years, MEP had become an integral part of all UNICEF work and would be discussed as appropriate in various reports to the Board.

336. She announced several changes among UNICEF senior staff: Marta Mauras, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, had been appointed Director of the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General; Shahida Azfar, Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, had been appointed UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh; Urban Jonsson, Regional Director for South Asia, would become the Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa; Cecilio Adorno, Representative in Colombia, had been appointed Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Richard Morgan, currently Regional Adviser in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, had been appointed Deputy Director, Programme Division, replacing Joe Judd, who had been named UNICEF Representative in China.

337. The President said that the session had been full and productive, in part because of the conscientious support provided to the Board by the Executive Director and her senior staff. The Board had seen the calibre and commitment of UNICEF professional staff during the session, which was an indication of the depth of UNICEF staff worldwide. The Board's discussions had provided useful guidance to the organization.

338. The Board's dynamic culture was distinctive, he said, because of its tradition of good will and cooperation. No other body in the United Nations system discussed the details of development cooperation in such an atmosphere. This tradition needed to be nurtured, and one way of doing so would be for delegations to be more conscientious about consultations. In closing the session, he thanked the conference officers, interpreters and secretariat staff.

1997 UNICEF Staff Awards for Outstanding Service

339. The Deputy Executive Director announced the winners of the 1997 Staff Awards, which are presented each year in recognition of exemplary accomplishments as members of groups, teams, offices or sections. The winners were: the staff of the UNICEF office in Sierra Leone, in recognition of the exceptional manner in which the evacuation and displacement of staff and the establishment of an office-in-exile were handled; and the staff of the UNICEF office in Rwanda, in recognition of their stamina in carrying out the UNICEF mandate in a country living through the worst chapter in its history.

Part three

SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1998

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 8 to 11 September 1998

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening of the session

340. The President of the Executive Board welcomed delegations, especially those who had come from capitals, and commented on the substantive issues to be considered at the session. It would be crucial, he said, for the Board to do its work carefully and rigorously.

341. He addressed some of his concerns, the most important of which related to the role of the Executive Board. While acknowledging the sensitive nature of this subject, he expressed the view that the Board, although usually inadvertently, erred either by seeking to micro-manage the work of UNICEF or by allowing itself to be managed by UNICEF so that its simply "rubber-stamped" the organization's own recommendations. Therefore, he encouraged the Board to keep in mind what its proper role of the Board should be on every issue that came before it.

342. The President also said that the role of the Board in relation to the reporting to the Economic and Social Council and reporting by the Executive Director should be reviewed as the lines of responsibility and accountability might not be clear. Delegations could begin to think about this issue with a view to considering whether any action or formal consideration might be desirable at some point in the future.

343. The Executive Director paid tribute to the seven colleagues and friends from the UNICEF and United Nations family whose lives were lost so tragically in the Swissair disaster. They were, she said, "in the front lines of the struggle to make this world a better place for children".

344. She recalled to delegations that the fulfilment of child rights and women's rights was essential to human progress and that the power of these rights was the reason the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been embraced by virtually every country in the world. In addition, because of child rights and the rights-based approach to programming of UNICEF, the world had been able to move closer to the goals of the World Summit for Children. The Executive Director outlined the progress being made in every region towards achieving the World Summit goals, noting that much of it was the product of the new and expanding alliances for children between UNICEF and its partners in Government and the United Nations system and civil society. She made particular mention of "UNICEF's unshakeable commitment to children" as contained in the medium-term plan (MTP), which set out how the organization's goals and accelerated priorities for children in the coming years would generate the added momentum necessary to carry it "towards the completion of a new agenda for children beyond the year 2000". (See E/ICEF/1998/CRP.17 for the full text of her statement.)

B. Adoption of the agenda

345. The agenda, timetable and organization of work of the session, as contained in documents E/ICEF/1998/12 and Corr.1, was adopted as amended orally. (A revised timetable and organization of work was subsequently issued as document E/ICEF/1998/12/Corr.2.) The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

Item 4: Medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Item 5: Draft strategy on resource mobilization

Item 6: Review of the recovery policy of UNICEF

Item 7: Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

Item 8: Review of the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations (CPRs)

Item 9: Report on internal audit activities

Item 10: Financial matters:

- (a) UNICEF financial report and statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1997 and report of the Board of Auditors*
- (b) Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*
- (c) Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) financial reports and statements for the year ended 30 April 1997 and for the period 1 May-31 December 1997**

Item 11: Report on the first meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH)

Item 12: Programme of work for 1999

Item 13: Other matters

Item 14: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

346. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 69 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session. In addition, four United Nations bodies, four National Committees for UNICEF and nine non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had submitted credentials.

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* Consideration of this agenda item was deferred to the first regular session in January 1999.

** As of 1 January 1998, GCO is known as the Private Sector Division (PSD).

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

347. The Director of United Nations Affairs and External Relations reported on the resolutions and decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998 that had direct implications for both the secretariat and Executive Board. He said that the substance itself would be included in part I of the annual report of the Executive Director to the Council, an item on the agenda of the first regular session of 1999, as well as in reports on specific issues.

348. The Director made two general points on the process itself. First, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) would both play significant roles in follow-up to Council decisions. In fact, UNDG had already begun collaborative follow-up on operational activities. Second, UNICEF had already begun internal meetings among substantive divisions to define more precisely the requirements for follow-up.

349. The High-level meeting on operational activities focused on the advancement of women and implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. The debate covered mainstreaming gender, capacity-building and resource mobilization for the participation of women in development, setting out a detailed and comprehensive series of tasks for the funds and programmes. The governing bodies were requested to ensure integrated monitoring and evaluation of mainstreaming activities and to evaluate impact. Thus, the UNICEF secretariat should submit to the Executive Board proposals for implementation of aspects dealing with monitoring of gender mainstreaming into MTPs and programme budgets. He said that the incorporation of a gender dimension into inter-agency programming mechanisms was being developed. It was, he continued, a key aspect of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Common Country Assessment (CCA), as well as of the strategic framework guidelines. A UNDG sub-group was responsible for gender issues and would be organising meetings of the chairs of all the other sub-groups to ensure full integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into all aspects of the work of UNDG. The secretariat would report to the Board both through the report on follow-up to the Council and also within the context of the progress report on mainstreaming gender which was on the agenda of the 1999 annual Board session.

350. The Council also addressed the triennial policy review under operational activities. Based on the recommendations of the Council, the Secretary-General's report had been finalized in a process that had been consultative and involved UNICEF input and participation. The issues addressed under this item concerned primarily the reform process and, therefore, formed the core of the work of UNDG.

351. The Economic and Social Council also adopted a number of other resolutions of relevance to operational activities, including malaria and diarrhoeal diseases; reporting of the United Nations funds and programmes to the Council; follow-up to international conferences; basic indicators; promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa; further measures for restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in economic, social and related fields; and the International Year of Micro-credit 2005.

352. Of particular interest was the resolution on reporting, which addressed in specific terms a number of the issues raised regularly at the present and other

Executive Board sessions on the annual reports to the Council. These included providing analysis of the problems encountered, the identification of specific problems; and opportunities and areas in which the Council could provide guidance. In addition, and for the first time, the Council made provision for the executive heads of the funds and programmes to submit to it, within the context of UNDG, a consolidated list of issues requiring consideration and guidance from the Council.

353. The substantive discussion on Africa was deferred until 1999 following consideration by the General Assembly. However, follow-up by the funds and programmes to the Secretary-General's report was being developed in the context of the Executive Committee structure. UNDG was addressing operational issues, while the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs were jointly addressing substantive follow-up actions to peace and security issues.

354. For the first time, the Director continued, the Economic and Social Council had a segment on humanitarian affairs. The Council reiterated the need for coordinated assistance and adequate financial resources, as well as for the smooth transition between relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development. The Council called on Governments and all parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to ensure the safety and access of humanitarian personnel. Of particular importance was that the smoother, phased transition was being addressed through a working group comprised of representatives from three Executive Committees (UNDG, ECHA and Peace and Security) and its work was intended to ensure full complementarity and consistency of the strategic framework, the Consolidated Appeals Process and UNDAF. The generic guidelines for the strategic framework were being developed within the context of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, and the issue of UNDAFs and strategic frameworks would be on the agenda of the Administrative Committee on Coordination at the end of October.

355. The coordination segment of the Council focused on implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In agreed conclusions, the Council reaffirmed the need for increased coordination in support of rights and fundamental freedoms and called on Governments to incorporate the standards contained in international human rights instruments into legislation and to strengthen national structures, institutions and organs of society. The conclusions stressed the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and were very positive on the rights-based approach of UNICEF based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the role of UNICEF in support of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF efforts to mainstream child rights were also emphasized.

356. The Director said that follow up to the Council would also be addressed within the UNDG Sub-group on the rights to development, which UNICEF co-chaired. The Sub-group would ensure that UNDAF guidelines better reflected the child rights dimension. This would be reported on further at both the January and June Board sessions. In conclusion, he noted a resolution on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) as an area of interest to UNICEF.

357. There were no comments on the oral report.

B. Medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

358. The Board had before it for review the MTP for the period 1998-2001 (E/ICEF/1998/13 and Corr.1). In her introductory remarks, the Executive Director emphasized that the MTP had been developed through a participatory process. It was guided by the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, built on past experiences and aimed to achieve results for children. The priority setting of the MTP would guide resource mobilization and allocation.

359. In her presentation, the Director, Division of Evaluation, Policy and Planning, added that the MTP provided a direction for country programmes; enabled flexibility to be able to adjust to global changes and diversity of situations; promoted a dynamic process; and created a bridge to the twenty-first century. She elaborated on the vision of a "child-friendly" world and on what could be achieved with this vision; explained the criteria applied in selecting organizational priorities; and emphasized that the MTP was meant to be operationalized and implemented. Organizational priorities would guide the budget process, provide a base for resource mobilization and set the context for country programmes of cooperation and office management plans. The monitoring and reporting on implementation would be built on existing mechanisms and through the annual reporting process. Based on past experience and income projections, the funding target of $1.5 billion by the year 2005 was realistic.

360. Most delegations complimented the secretariat for a high-quality plan, adding that it represented a dramatic improvement over the previous ones. They welcomed the analysis of external and internal environments, as well as of the opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses. One delegation said that the external environment analysis should have included an analysis of child development situations, such as health care and education, as well as of the role of UNICEF compared to other organizations. Other speakers said that the analysis failed to mentioned HIV/AIDS or highlight UNDAF. The secretariat replied that HIV/AIDS was a priority for the organization, but due to page limitations, not all analyses were included in the document. In carrying out its mission, UNICEF had been working closely with partners both within and outside the United Nations system.

361. The strategies and cross-cutting approaches detailed in the report were welcomed by many delegations, with several of them expressing support for using the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the World Summit for Children as the over-arching framework for the plan. Several speakers said that more emphasis should have been placed on the role of Governments and other partners.

362. Many delegations expressed strong support for the organizational priorities, as they provided a clear direction for UNICEF. Although some speakers welcomed the link between priorities and budget, one speaker said that the link was not clear enough. Another delegation said that there was little mention of gender equality in the MTP and requested more details. Several delegations suggested that organizational objectives should be as quantified as possible and included in the plan. One speaker noted a lack of guidance on geographic allocation, and believed that Africa and least developed countries should still be priorities for UNICEF. Another delegation said that meeting children's basic needs was still the basic priority for UNICEF, and policy reforms should not be put above the basic needs of children. An increased focus on poverty elimination was suggested by one delegation. In response, the

secretariat said that the world was very diverse and that the MTP could not reflect every situation. It would be translated into concrete action plans in different locations. Moreover, the MTP did not cover geographic allocations as this subject was dealt with in other documents, such as the report on the allocation of general resources.

363. The funding target was supported by many delegations, although several questioned the reliability of the figures, saying that the target was too optimistic. Many delegations called for the international community to increase its donations to reach the funding target. Questions were raised about the relationship between the funding target and the MTP, and it was suggested that organizational priorities should be reviewed together with the resource mobilization paper. The secretariat said that the figures were based on previous performance and the best intelligence, but they were still projections. Based on past experience, the capacity to absorb additional resources and a study of the 20/20 Initiative, the secretariat was optimistic about the funding target.

364. In response to a query about the intention of UNICEF to establish more National Committees in the coming year, the Executive Director said that they presently numbered 37 and that they were all active in carrying out the UNICEF mission, especially fund-raising activities. There were no plans to establish any new National Committees.

365. A number of speakers said that the implementation of the organizational priorities should be put into a country context and aligned with the country's policies and development needs. Many delegations welcomed the introduction of the section in the report on monitoring and reporting, and said that this was especially important for improving management. However, one delegation said that this section lacked details on implementation and indicators to assess results. More details should be provided on how UNICEF intended to monitor and report to the Board through the Executive Director's annual report. Another delegation suggested that there should be more information on monitoring results. The secretariat replied that reporting would be based on existing mechanisms, such as the Executive Director's annual report to the Board, the Secretary-General's report on the World Summit for Children, the annual progress report on the World Summit and the annual audit report. Reporting on results would be through the annual process of the country report on indicators for the goals (CRING) and multiple indicator cluster surveys.

366. The Executive Director expressed her appreciation for the comments and advice provided by the Board. She further emphasized that the MTP provided a road map and was an action plan for implementation. For this purpose, the participation of the Board and Governments in its implementation was of critical importance. (See the annex, decision 1998/22, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

367. Following the adoption of the decision, which had been the subject of informal consultations, one delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the Executive Board had always been efficient and had operated with a high level of integrity. The previous day, the Board had been requested to consider a series of amendments to the draft decision proposed by the secretariat in the report, and had agreed to postpone the consultations until the next day to allow delegations time to consider the changes. However, that morning, another delegation had proposed last minute changes to the text, although, the speaker said, it could have done so the previous day. The delegation opposed this type of procedure and hoped that it would not be

repeated. Another delegation said that in introducing the last minute amendments, it had not meant to create difficulties for others and regretted the misunderstanding.

C. Draft strategy on resource mobilization

368. The report on the "Draft resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1998/14) was introduced by the Executive Director who highlighted the following three basic premises underlying the proposed strategy: (a) core resources were the foundation of UNICEF funding; (b) greater predictability of funding allowed for more accurate programme and financial planning; and (c) the expressed concern by Board members for increased burden-sharing. The Executive Director underscored the recognized need for measures to be taken by the secretariat - some of which were already in progress - including improved contribution management, donor reporting and other initiatives outlined in the report. As the report was still a draft, with some of the figures being only indicative, she urged the Executive Board to provide guidance to the secretariat on the further development of the proposed strategy.

369. Many speakers noted with satisfaction the secretariat's efforts to ensure that the report reflected the issues and concerns raised by delegations in earlier discussions on the subject. The link between the report and the MTP was highlighted by several delegations. One delegation referred to ongoing discussions on the issue of resource mobilization in other forums, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA Executive Board, and urged the secretariat to move further towards developing an integrated multi-year, results-based budget. This recommendation was echoed by several other speakers.

370. In this connection, while supporting the call for a multi-year budget, some delegations referred to national legislation that would prevent their Governments from making multi-year pledges. However, other delegations indicated that they would have no objection to the proposal for voluntary indicative pledges for future years in cases where this was possible or where measures could be taken to facilitate more predictable payment schedules. Numerous speakers underlined the voluntary nature of UNICEF funding and cautioned that the proposal for a minimum annual contribution to UNICEF of 1 per cent of official development assistance could be interpreted as moving away from this principle. Several speakers called for an increased emphasis on linking government contributions to the 20/20 Initiative.

371. Linking this discussion with the funding target proposed in the MTP, several delegations questioned whether the proposed increase in government contributions was not overly optimistic, and a number of them requested further clarification on the methodology used for estimating a target growth rate of 7 per cent per year. Other speakers expressed appreciation to UNICEF for setting funding targets and for the quanitification of resources required to achieve the goals for children. The secretariat explained that the target figures were based on estimates arrived at in an inter-agency effort to calculate the increase in global expenditures required to ensure universal access to basic social services. Given the comparative advantage of UNICEF in this area, it was a modest assumption to expect that should there be an increase in development assistance for basic social services as part of the 20/20 Initiative, then there would be a proportionate increase in UNICEF income. In response to a question about whether UNICEF had the absorptive capacity to handle increased resources, the secretariat referred to previous years when income levels were higher, and noted that UNICEF had not experienced major absorptive problems. Furthermore,

the income goals set in the strategy paper were relatively modest when taking into consideration inflationary costs.

372. The ability of UNICEF to mobilize resources for children even if these were not channelled through the organization was noted with satisfaction. The call for increased debt relief and further dialogue and collaboration with the international financial institutions were cited as good examples in this regard. The important role of a good advocacy and communication strategy for effective resource mobilization was also noted.

373. There was a positive reaction to the concept of providing funds for specific themes, and the secretariat was requested to explore thematic funding for multi-agency proposals.

374. Several delegations underscored the importance of supplementary funding for Board-approved country programmes and questioned whether or not too much emphasis was being given to core resources. On the other hand, the catalytic role of core resources in mobilizing supplementary funding was also mentioned. In response to this concern, the secretariat explained that the focus on general resources was not an indicator of diminished interest in supplementary funding; however, the effective use of supplementary funding could best be ensured when there was a solid core resource base. Furthermore, predictable general resources funding would ensure an appropriate presence and programmes in all countries independent of the level of supplementary funding.

375. On the issue of reporting, a number of delegations expressed interest in a simplified reporting format, and one delegation requested a copy of UNICEF reporting guidelines. Another speaker emphasized that the ability to report on core funds was also important.

376. There was overall support for the measures outlined for emergency contributions, especially simplified reporting. However, several speakers remarked that their Governments' emergency contributions must be earmarked. Clarifications were also requested regarding the increased flexibility of emergency contributions.

377. The potential for increased private sector resource mobilization was noted by numerous delegations. However, while encouraging the secretariat to further develop strategies for increased private sector fund-raising, some speakers stressed that this should not detract from the intergovernmental nature of the organization and the responsibilities of member Governments.

378. In response to the comments and queries from delegations, the secretariat emphasized the importance of continued, open dialogue as this was still a draft strategy, and in this connection, agreed to schedule an informal consultation to further discuss the resource mobilization strategy that would be presented to the Board at the first regular session in January 1999. Further details on the timing would be communicated at a later date. Regarding concerns expressed about moving away from the voluntary nature of contributions, the Executive Director emphasized that the 1 per cent proposal was purely illustrative. She also cautioned about the use of ambiguous terms such as "soft earmarking" of funds and acknowledged the importance of the ability to report on general resources. In referring to the growing trend towards the decentralization of donor assistance, the Executive Director explained that while UNICEF representatives would be encouraged to fund-raise locally, this would not be at the expense of good, solid country programmes, which in and of themselves could be the best sales tools for increased donor funding at the country level. (See

the annex, decision 1998/14, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Review of the recovery policy of UNICEF

379. The Executive Board had before it for consideration the following documents:

(a) "The UNICEF recovery policy" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.6);

(b) "UNICEF recovery policy: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.12).

380. In introducing this agenda item, the Comptroller summarized the basic principles of the methodology put forward in the UNICEF report. The working assumptions were based on the modalities of UNICEF that one gross support budget would cover the costs of programme support and management and administration for both general resources and supplementary funding. For the most part, supplementary-funded programmes were continuations of or scaling up of general resources programmes and, therefore, the basic coordinating structure and expertise were already in place. Consequently, some activities and costs at field and headquarter offices were assumed fixed and presented independent of the volume of supplementary funds. Other activities and costs were incremental and variable according to the volume of supplementary funds. Only variable costs from units involved in supplementary funds transactions were included in the recovery analysis. From this starting point, a reasonable and fair activity- based costing model had been suggested.

381. In summary, using the Executive Board-approved assumptions for the 1998-1999 biennium budget, the methodology estimated the global incremental support costs to total $72 million for the biennium, equivalent to 9.5 per cent of budgeted $757 million supplementary-funded programmes. The breakdown of these costs was calculated to be $47 million at country and regional offices and $25 million at headquarters divisions.

382. A second element of the proposed recovery policy related to the application of the interest earned on supplementary-funded cash balances. At any time, UNICEF managed approximately 1,500 unique supplementary-funded projects; therefore, at any time, there were cash balances earning interest. The proposition was that interest earned on supplementary-funded cash balances, which according to financial rules and regulations, would continue to be an item in miscellaneous income to general resources, would cover part of the incremental costs of the supplementary-funded programmes.

383. UNICEF estimated the interest income for supplementary-funded cash balances for the 1998-1999 biennium to be $32 million. When interest income was applied against total costs, the balance of incremental costs related to managing supplementary funds was reduced to $40 million, which corresponded to a 5 per cent recovery.

384. Several member countries welcomed the initiative put into the complicated matter of estimating the amount to charge supplementary-funded programmes for the cost of management and administration. There was an expressed agreement among many speakers that costs of implementing supplementary funds programmes should not be borne by general resources.

385. While endorsing the approach taken in principle, several delegations had difficulty understanding how, on a daily basis, UNICEF operated cash balances and how interest income was accrued, measured and applied. In particular, it was difficult for them to understand the predictability of interest income and the accuracy with which these figures could be applied when compared to other budget estimates. Some speakers asked UNICEF to explain whether the fluctuations of interest income had been considered when the elements of the model had been discussed and chosen.

386. The Comptroller explained the uncertainty associated with any budget figure. Interest income and supplementary funds receipts were unpredictable. However, given any revised combination of budget predictions, a sufficient recovery percentage could be calculated using the principles laid out in the proposed model. Regarding the daily management of cash balances, UNICEF could calculate and impute interest income from the dates cash was received to the dates it was expended on current balances of any supplementary-funded project.

387. Some delegations endorsed the proposed 5 per cent recovery rate as a modest and reasonable amount and supported the philosophy of applying a cost recovery based on averages. Other speakers, however, supported a full recovery rate that responded to the total cost of all involved activities. To these considerations, the Comptroller explained that UNICEF did not have an elaborate cost accounting system, which would be required for a detailed full analysis. Instead, UNICEF had proposed a model in which all assumptions were reasonably accurate and fully transparent as approved in the biennial budget.

388. Two member States proposed that supplementary funds raised locally in programme countries should be exempt from recovery charges. Both wished not to reduce incentives to public support in programme countries. Representatives from some countries were concerned about whether it was appropriate to raise the recovery percentage charge while their countries were enduring economic crises and fluctuating exchange rates. The Comptroller replied that UNICEF did not support exceptions since local fund-raising in programme countries received general resources-funded professional support to maintain the internal control environment. In some cases, PSD also provided seed money and marketing support for local fund-raising. (See the annex, decision 1998/21, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

389. An overview of the 28 proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation being submitted to the Executive Board was provided by the Director, Programme Division. The proposals included 13 recommendations for full-duration country programmes of cooperation, which had been outlined earlier in the form of country notes. There were an additional 12 recommendations for short-duration programmes and 5 recommendations for approval of additional general resources for current programmes where the balance of approved funds was insufficient to fund the programmes up to the end of the approved programme periods.

390. The Director indicated that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Executive Board and national policies and, where relevant, Country Strategy Notes, had provided the guiding framework for the formulation of the new proposals. There had generally been wide participation in their preparation at the country level. Earlier mid-term reviews (MTRs) and situation analyses had provided important inputs to programme design, as had the comments of the Executive Board on the respective country notes. The largest number of new

proposals were from the regions in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Final clearance of the recommendations had been made at the regional level, under the newly devolved programming procedures within the secretariat.

391. An increased emphasis on children's rights in programmes was evidenced through explicit attention to principles of universality, with a balance sought between the availability of quality basic services for all families and, where necessary due to disparities, a strategic focus on disadvantaged groups and areas. Concern for participation, empowerment, improving the status of women and strengthening the legislative framework for children's rights was also increasingly demonstrated in the proposals. The role of UNICEF at the country level was evolving also in the direction of knowledge generation, disaggregated data for decision-making and support to local innovation, sometimes within the context of sector-wide reform programmes. These trends were providing diverse and complex challenges to UNICEF field staff.

392. The Director indicated that five of the new proposals came from countries in which the process of formulating an UNDAF had commenced, within the UNDAF pilot phase. This had tended to promote a stronger consultation process among United Nations agencies and had helped to identify collaborative opportunities for the new programme period. The UNDAF exercise also gave UNICEF the opportunity to promote the centrality of the rights of children and women within the overall priorities for United Nations country-level assistance.

393. In conclusion, the Director noted that the renewed focus on children's rights entailed, where necessary, strong emphasis on essential services for the survival and development of children, particularly in emergency situations. Approved country programmes were providing the basis for efforts throughout UNICEF to intensify support to national efforts to meet the goals of the World Summit for Children. In emergency situations, flexibility had been built into the basic programme framework, and the regular mechanisms for review and possible reallocation of general resources would allow country offices and UNICEF partners the scope to address crises affecting children and women.

Eastern and Southern Africa

394. The Executive Board had before it two full-length CPRs, for Angola (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.8/Add.1) and Kenya (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.10/Add.1), and two short-duration CPRs, for Mozambique (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.23) and Somalia (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.24). The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa gave a brief overview of the evolution of UNICEF programmes of cooperation in the region over the last 10 years. He noted that the changes in programming had resulted from a combination of both internal and external factors such as globalization, economic reform, the growing number of emergencies, decentralization and democracy, including majority rule in South Africa. Internally, the adoption of a Mission Statement enabled a sharper focus on priorities for children, while implementation of the management excellence programme (MEP) enhanced management aspects of new programmes of cooperation. In this connection, there had been a more systematic approach to MTRs, which drew on lessons learned from past cooperation for the preparation of the next programmes. A larger number of development partners participated in the situation assessment and problem analysis processes, which had facilitated the role and contribution of UNICEF to CCAs and UNDAF. He reported on the selection of priority activities in the region, noting that more systematic efforts were being made to design programmes with better integration and convergence of activities, community participation and empowerment. The move to a rights-based

approach to programming was a recent change in focus that was evident in the new CPRs.

395. Welcoming the new CPRs, one delegation remarked that the Mozambique CPR provided only limited information on lessons learned from the past programme of cooperation and did not fully clarify the role of other collaborating agencies. The same delegation felt that activities to be undertaken could have been better defined, with more emphasis given to strengthening national capacity-building. The same speaker also felt that the amount of $40 million to be raised in supplementary funds during the three-year programme period was too high. Another speaker called for better coordination among development partners in the region in view of the diversity of actors, particularly in the health sector, and the need to improve coherence and synergy of action for greater impact. The same delegation called on UNICEF to help facilitate communication and coordination between development partners in the region.

396. The Regional Director said that additional information on the Mozambique CPR was available, including details on lessons learned, which could be shared with interested Board members. He considered that the supplementary funding portion of the recommendation was realistic, although slightly high, and noted that the estimate was based on an assessment of previous donor responses and the country's track record of raising supplementary funds. With regard to regional coordination, the Regional Director expressed the hope that United Nations reform would help to improve the process. He stressed the need to support Government capacity-building to play a stronger coordination role at the country level and underscored the need to build the capacity of regional and subregional coordination structures such as the Organization of African Unity and the South African Development Coordination Conference.

397. With regard to the Angola country programme, another speaker described the complex challenges facing children in that country, highlighting the impact of armed conflict in Africa and the persistence of economic disparities. The speaker noted that improvements in the situation of children worldwide remained insufficient, especially in the areas of nutrition, education, health care, water supply and basic sanitation, and stressed the need to increase support to children in Angola.

West and Central Africa

398. The Executive Board had before it four full-length CPRs, for Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania and the Gambia (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.11/Add.1-E/ICEF/1998/P/L.14, respectively), and four short-duration CPRs, for the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and the Niger (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.25-E/ICEF/1998/P/L.28, respectively). In introducing the CPRs, the Regional Director for West and Central Africa highlighted the special attention given to social mobilization, which aimed at reinforcing positive behaviour, promoting behavioural change and involving families themselves in programme development. Structural adjustment programmes in the region had limited Governments' ability to implement social programmes without support. As a result, child survival issues remained high on the UNICEF agenda for children in the region. She noted that most programmes aimed at reducing infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates, which were among the highest in the world, and expressed the hope that tangible progress would be made.

399. Welcoming the CPRs from the region, one delegation expressed appreciation for the fruitful cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Benin, especially in the areas of poverty alleviation and diseases control. The

speaker noted that major achievements included the improvement of access and quality of health services and new initiatives to stop child abuse and trafficking in girl children, which required coordination with other countries in the region. The speaker regretted the decline in UNICEF financial resources and called upon the donor community to support UNICEF to help the children of Benin. The Regional Director commented that UNICEF was working with the Governments and civil society organisations in the region to stem the trafficking of young girls as domestic servants by raising awareness about the problem.

400. Another delegation expressed appreciation for UNICEF work in Equatorial Guinea and called for special attention to be paid to the problems of malaria and meningitis, which were major child killers. The same speaker highlighted the problem of early marriages, the right of women to land and adult literacy. The Regional Director confirmed that UNICEF was working closely with WHO to firm up innovative approaches for malaria control and with many other partners who were assisting in the prevention and control of the meningitis outbreak.

401. Another delegation regretted that the Congo CPR did not provide sufficient information on the role of other development partners in the country. The same speaker also expressed regret that while the situation in the Congo continued to deteriorate, UNICEF seemed to be scaling down its interventions. For example, no activities were planned in the area of water and sanitation. The delegation also noted that the achievements of the previous programme (1992-1996) had not been assessed. In the Congo, remarked the Regional Director, the situation continued to be precarious, and there were no security guarantees for the medium term.

402. With regard to the CPR for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one delegation felt that the proposal was weak and did not address the challenges created by the new situation nor how UNICEF would respond. The same speaker said that no lessons learned from the past programme of cooperation were presented and that priority areas were not clearly expressed. The importance of coordination with other development partners at work in the country was also stressed. The Regional Director underscored the difficult conditions under which UNICEF staff were operating, including the recent evacuation of staff for security reasons.

403. One delegation expressed satisfaction with the quality of the Liberia CPR, which it considered provided a good example of clarity, adaptive programming and partnership development. In the view of the speaker, the CPR clearly reflected how to move from emergency assistance to sectoral policy development and promotion. The Regional Director added that UNICEF activities were proceeding cautiously due to the volatile security situation there.

Americas and the Caribbean

404. The Board had for its consideration the full-length CPR for Ecuador (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.15/Add.1)and a recommendation for a short-duration country programme for Colombia (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.29). In introducing the recommendations, the Acting Regional Director acknowledged the role that the Governments of the two countries had played in the formulation of the programmes of cooperation, as well as the positive results of MEP in the two UNICEF offices. He highlighted several positive developments in both countries: the recent constitutional amendments granting children full citizenship rights and the formulation of a national programme to combat maternal mortality in Ecuador; and, as a result of the MTR, the incorporation of important new programme

elements such as the protection of children in armed conflict and the reorientation of the basic services programmes towards a local development model in Colombia. Experience in the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child had highlighted the importance of social movements in influencing societal values towards children's rights. He noted that the major challenges facing the region were to construct more equal societies, strengthen the democratization process and develop a culture of cooperation and solidarity based on the need to reach and sustain the goals agreed at the World Summit for Children in 1990. The challenge to UNICEF was to support the social agenda in the region by ensuring that respect for children's rights led to the expansion of citizenship rights.

405. There was also a short video presentation, which provided a glimpse of the creativity, energy and commitment to the defence of children of all those involved in the programmes at municipal level in both Ecuador and Colombia. One delegation expressed support for such presentations as a means to bring a unique field perspective to the proceedings.

406. Appreciation was also expressed to all those who had worked on behalf of UNICEF in his country, and the speaker cited in particular the pioneering work that the former Regional Director had done in the region in favour of children's rights and the dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Noting that the success of the Ecuador depended on the joint work of the Government, civil society (especially the private sector) and UNICEF, the same speaker said that her Government would fully meet all of its obligations. The Government's social policies were clear and the national objectives were fully reflected in the proposed programme. Improvement of basic services, decentralization and support to community development were all elements of the country's sustainable development strategy. The delegation also highlighted the personal commitment of the President of Ecuador to the development of local systems for the protection of children. The delegation expressed the hope that donor contributions to UNICEF would allow it to continue to be a model agency within the United Nations system.

407. Another speaker expressed his Government's appreciation of the work of UNICEF in his country. The achievement of some of the basic goals for children in Colombia had allowed his Government to focus on the major challenge it faced - the consolidation of peace. The agreement to ensure that children did not participate in conflict was an indication that the country was anxious to ensure respect for international law. The delegation noted that UNICEF cooperation had been vital in the peace initiatives, adding that his Government would continue to work with UNICEF in the pursuit of goals for children and fully endorsed the proposed Government/UNICEF programme of cooperation.

408. In response to a query about the financing of micro-credit activities within the Colombia country programme, the Acting Regional Director noted that these were not activities to which UNICEF would devote significant resources. Pilot activities in this area had been supported earlier which needed to be disseminated more widely. UNICEF would support the dissemination process, but not actual credit financing.

East Asia and the Pacific

409. In introducing the two full-length CPRs, for the Philippines (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.16/Add.1) and Thailand (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.17/Add.1), and the short-duration proposal for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.30), the Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific

highlighted the economic crisis facing the first two countries and the natural disasters experienced by the third. He emphasised that while the crisis persisted, these countries continued to accord a high priority to human development, with significant investment in education, nutrition, primary health care, and improved status of women and girls. The proposed country programmes aimed to deal with these issues in a significant way.

410. He said that the proposed country programme for Thailand would support government efforts to achieve and sustain the goals of the national programme of action, including to promote awareness for child rights through public education, information and communication efforts. Special emphasis would be placed on child protection issues and improving regional exchanges of experience. The country programme of the Philippines was developed as a catalyst for a nation-wide "child-friendly" movement. The programme would provide strong support to local policy and institutional development, and harness the power and outreach of the communications media in the country. With regard to the proposed short-duration programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Regional Director said that it sought to provide continuity in UNICEF cooperation over the next two years as a complement to the continuing large-scale emergency assistance programme.

411. There were no comments from delegations.

South Asia

412. The Deputy Regional Director for South Asia began her presentation of the three full-length country programme proposals, for India (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.31), Maldives (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.18/Add.1) and Pakistan (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.19/Add.1), with a quote by the late Dr. Mahbub ul Haq - "South Asia is fast emerging as the poorest, most illiterate, the most deprived region in the world". She spoke briefly about poverty and the problems affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable in the region. In presenting the objectives and strategies of the three country programmes, she said that there was a commitment for change, which rested on the need for global partnerships. The issue of women in development, with its emphasis on gender and women's empowerment, was also addressed. She stressed the need for enhanced and long-term investments by the donor community to sustain the achievements of the past.

413. There were no comments from delegations.

Middle East and North Africa

414. The Executive Board had before it for consideration one full-length CPR for Djibouti (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.20/Add.1); two short-duration recommendations, for Iraq (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.32) and Yemen (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.33); and one request for additional general resources for the Islamic Republic of Iran (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.34). The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa elaborated on the important progress which had been made in the region in child health, school enrolment for boys and girls, and safe drinking water, while also emphasizing gender inequality as one of the most pressing and persistent issues in the region. He reported on the impact the gender gap has had on the status of women and on access to basic health services as reflected in the high maternal mortality rates in many countries in the region. Hence, increasingly, UNICEF support in the region was focusing on addressing the urgent needs of women through the mainstreaming of services and measures that promoted empowerment.

415. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken by UNICEF in their respective countries for children and women as reflected in the CPRs, and requested Executive Board members for their support. In response to a query regarding implementation percentages in the current programmes, the Regional Director proposed to discuss the issue bilaterally.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

416. The Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States presented the CPRs for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.35-E/ICEF/1998/P/L.38, respectively). He briefly described the four country programmes, each of which had distinct features in terms of the situation of its children, in the way that national development and political events were affecting children's rights and development, and in the way that UNICEF organised its programmes of cooperation. He reported more broadly on trends and issues in the region, with a special emphasis on youth and education.

417. In closing, the Regional Director remembered Yves de Roussan, UNICEF Regional Adviser for Eastern Europe and the Baltics, a passenger on the ill-fated Swissair flight. He spoke of his special capacity to help children under conditions of great adversity and war, and his special sense of mission - "defending the rights of the worst off, least served children and adolescents with a passion."

418. One observer delegation commended UNICEF on the valuable work done in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia since implementation of the UNICEF country programme in his country in 1993 and also expressed appreciation that all components of the previous country programme had been included in the present proposal. The speaker reiterated his Government's commitment to respond to the challenges of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children.

419. Another observer delegation attached great importance to the constructive role that UNICEF had played in the wide spectrum of activities that had been undertaken in close cooperation with the Government of Croatia, especially in helping to reduce the effects on children of the significant social and economic changes his country has experienced over the last few years. The delegation particularly appreciated the support of UNICEF in the progress achieved in the areas of health, nutrition, education, children in need of special protection measures and in the successful implementation in the mine awareness programme. The UNICEF approach in the proposed programme was welcomed, and it was hoped that donor countries would demonstrate their support.

420. One delegation commented that the CPR for Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared to provide the right programme mix, and that while reconstruction was under way, UNICEF would need to focus support on children in need of special protection measures. He noted that this priority was adequately reflected in the allocation of resources.

421. With regard to the proposed programme for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, one speaker questioned how UNICEF intended to implement programme components relating to Kosovo given its presence in the field in Pristina and, in particular, how planning had been affected by recent developments and how these activities related to emergency activities in the region.

422. The Regional Director advised that UNICEF had established a small office in Pristina nearly two years ago, with approximately six staff members responsible for carrying out programme activities in Kosovo during that period of time. Under the leadership and guidance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF was working with a network of United Nations organizations, and international and local NGOs to cover the requirements of the people suffering in Kosovo. UNICEF had been providing special assistance for hygienic kits and medical kits for health posts, and was also working with a primary health team from Kosovo which provided care to internally displaced people and psychosocial trauma support to families. He emphasised that there was effective coordination between all United Nations agencies in Kosovo.

423. See the annex, decision 1998/16, for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

Europe

424. The presentation of the Regional Director for Europe focused on the right to education, which has become a legal and political commitment of almost every State in the world as a result of the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In view of its key role in development, human rights and the empowerment of individuals and communities, education was a strategic element of the UNICEF mission. He spoke about the relationship between education and other rights, especially in the area of child labour. He also provided examples of the successful collaboration between the Office for Europe and National Committees for UNICEF in the region in mobilising public interest, resources and political commitment in support of the UNICEF priority to education for all children and to end intolerable forms of child labour.

F. Review of the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations

425. The Director, Programme Division, introduced the report on the "Review of the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations" (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.22) which had been prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1). The decision called for a review of the new arrangements for consideration and review of programmes introduced under the terms of the decision in 1996.

426. The Director indicated that the introduction of the new arrangements had coincided with the decentralisation of support and oversight of the country programme planning and budgeting process within UNICEF to the regional level and with new initiatives to strengthen the quality and coherence of United Nations operational activities at the country level. A further important factor during this period had been the increasing prominence of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a basis for UNICEF/Government cooperation, which had been reflected both in new programme proposals and adjustments made through MTRs.

427. The Director indicated that there had been a notable strengthening of the strategy and MTR processes within the overall programme planning cycle during the period. In addition, the country programme management plan (CPMP), linked to the integrated budget, had provided an important instrument for the more systematic planning and organisation of the totality of UNICEF resources at the country level in support of country programmes. During this period, the secretariat had provided updated programme guidelines, including on human rights approaches to programming, and had sought to maintain a dialogue with the

Executive Board whose views on programme documents had been systematically conveyed to UNICEF field offices. Efforts had been made to promote the sharing of experiences between regions and to maintain the responsiveness of the programming process to national policies and coordination mechanisms.

428. He remarked that comments of Executive Board members on the reports had noted both significant improvements in the programming process over the last three years, as well as areas in which further improvements should be sought. These included the need for a more in-depth analysis of lessons learned from past cooperation and their linkage to new programme proposals; further clarity on proposed areas of priority and the proposed objectives, as well as the better definition of the "core" strategies and areas of activity to be supported by general resources; greater clarity on the strategic role of UNICEF cooperation in relation to national goals and objectives and the contributions of other agencies; a more systematic derivation of lessons learned with relation to strategies for national capacity-building and sustained results for children and women; and a more systematic use of the evaluation function in both programme management and the preparation of new programmes. A similar combination of areas of achievement and for further improvement was noted with relation to MTRs.

429. In the ensuing discussion, several delegations praised the review paper for its useful overview of experience since the changes were introduced in 1996, and expressed support for the draft recommendation. The revised system was felt to have increased the transparency of the programme review process as well as the scope for the views of members of the Executive Board to be taken into account before country programmes were finalized with Governments. At the same time, some delegations urged that the Executive Board itself provide more comprehensive comments on programme proposals and that members should be more thoroughly familiar with them in order to be able to advocate in favour of the work of UNICEF. One speaker suggested that the earlier system might be revived, whereby a sample of country programme proposals would be presented by the secretariat in greater depth. An increased use of audio-visual presentations of UNICEF work at the field level in the presentation of country programmes was also suggested. Speakers agreed that it was clear that the outcome of the pilot phase of the UNDAF was likely to have implications for the programming process.

430. A question was raised as to the lack of analysis of experience with CPRs in the review paper. The secretariat explained that, as per decision 1995/8, the review paper had concentrated on assessing the new modalities introduced in 1996 as distinct from pre-existing ones. The same speaker also asked whether the secretariat had used clear and systematic criteria for deciding in favour of short-duration programmes. The Director recalled the three major criteria: the existence of ongoing emergency situations; the request of the cooperating Government for the length of the country programme to relate to national planning periods; and the need to harmonise with the programme cycles of other United Nations agencies. In response to a question regarding the latter criterion, estimates were given of the extent of harmonization so far achieved in country programme cycles among United Nations agencies. The Executive Director mentioned that the UNDG was reviewing how the harmonization process could now be accelerated.

431. Several delegations agreed with the assessment of the secretariat that the quality of programme strategies and MTRs had improved and on the areas that needed further strengthening, such as the link between situation analysis and programme strategies, the more precise definition of programme objectives and the more systematic use of evaluations. One delegation suggested that programme

proposals should not only continue to demonstrate responsiveness to country conditions, but might also vary in length according to the size of programmes and the complexity of the problems addressed. One speaker urged that further involvement of civil society organizations be sought in the programme preparation process and that UNICEF maintain its dialogue with Governments on human rights in the context of programme cooperation. This should include a more systematic incorporation of the recommendations to States Parties from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Other delegations emphasized that programme preparation and related guidelines issued by the secretariat should continue to emphasize the primary role of Governments in leading the process. However, a question was as to whether it is UNICEF or the Government that initiated the process and determined the extent of involvement of other partners. The Director, Programme Division, clarified that, while the UNICEF representative normally proposed a broad participation of relevant partners at country level in programme preparation and review, the process was a collaborative one in which the final determination of this issue rested with cooperating Governments.

432. One delegation expressed the hope that the UNDAF exercise and CCA would assist UNICEF in focusing its programme cooperation on a narrower range of areas and sectors. It was felt that, despite the priorities expressed in documents such as the MTP, the programme proposals continued to imply an excessive dispersal of UNICEF support at the country level. It was suggested that future country notes and CPRs should reflect a clearer focus on the survival of children and on the goals of the World Summit for Children. A call for the setting of clearer targets and more systematic reviews of progress in relation to these targets was also supported. The Director commented that the recommendations continued to address issues of child survival, development and protection within a rights framework and mentioned that efforts were being made to accelerate progress towards the goals of the World Summit through the programme priorities initiative, which incorporated several areas directly related to the survival of children and women.

433. Responding to other comments made, the Director indicated that he had been encouraged by the numerous and constructive interventions by Board members. On the question of evaluations, he indicated that the secretariat was aiming to improve the evaluation process as part of assuring the overall quality of the programme process, and that the priority was to raise the quality of evaluations rather than necessarily to increase their quantity. Where possible, evaluations should have a direct linkage with the programme annual and mid-term review exercises. In response to a question on experience with coordination of international assistance by Governments, the Director expressed the belief that the introduction of both sector-wide approaches and the UNDAF provided potential for improved coordination and effectiveness of development assistance. Finally, he mentioned that the field visits by the Executive Board members provided an additional opportunity for them to become more familiar with UNICEF work at the country level. The Executive Director concluded by confirming that the secretariat would revert to the Executive Board with additional proposals regarding the consideration of country programmes following the completion of the assessment by the United Nations of the UNDAF pilot process. (See the annex, decision 1998/16, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Report on internal audit activities

434. The Director of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA), in introducing this first report to the Executive Board on internal audit activities (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.7), stressed how seriously the audit function was taken in UNICEF. High priority was given to the audit of field locations, and he was able to report a significant increase in coverage of field locations and key headquarter functions. This increased coverage had been secured with increased resources. In 1997, six new auditors had joined OIA, and the Director welcomed the additional resources for audit which had been approved by the Executive Board for the 1998-1999 biennium.

435. Although the standards of internal control in the offices audited varied, the Director observed that many offices were making great efforts to improve controls, and in a number of offices, there had been a significant improvement in controls since the last audit. He also said that offices generally took swift action to implement audit recommendations and he had been impressed by how swiftly local management undertook audit follow-up.

436. Several delegations welcomed the fact that the OIA had been further expanded and strengthened with increased resources, with one speaker welcoming the new capacity to meet unplanned demands. Comments were made about the high proportion of audit recommendations (some 90 per cent) that had been accepted by management locally, which reflected well on the quality of the audit recommendations (over 1,300) made in 1997. It was suggested that charts be included in subsequent reports to the Executive Board to give the characteristics of the offices audited. The Director, OIA, explained the rigorous criteria used in selecting offices to audit. He also said that careful note had been taken of the helpful suggestions made by delegations. (See the annex, decision 1998/17, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Greeting Card and related Operations financial reports and statements for the year ended 30 April 1997 and for the period 1 May-31 December 1997

437. The Director, PSD, presented the financial reports and statements for the 12-month period ending 30 April 1997 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.10) and for the 8-month period 1 May-31 December 1997 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.11). He explained briefly that the shortfall in PSD consolidated income, when comparing 1996 to 1997, was due mainly to the change in the PSD fiscal year as the 1997 period covered only 8 months as compared to 12 months in 1996. In addition, the continued strength of the United States dollar against the other currencies (in which the bulk of PSD activity was conducted) and a 7 per cent decline in card sales volume in 1997 were other factors that contributed to the lower income.

438. In response to questions from delegations, the Director advised that, based on the new structure now being put into place, along with new marketing strategies, PSD was optimistic about reversing the downward income trend. He added that the marketing strategies would be detailed in the PSD work plan and budget for 1999 being submitted to the Executive Board at its January 1999 session. (See the annex, decision 1998/18, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

I. Report on the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

439. The Chief of the Health Section provided the Board with a brief summary of the report on the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA CCH, which was held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 3 and 4 July 1998 (E/ICEF/1998/15). This was the first meeting of the expanded and renamed Joint Committee on Health Policy, at which UNFPA participated as a full member.

440. CCH reviewed its terms of reference, taking into account suggestions made by previous WHO and UNICEF Executive Boards, and recommended that the draft terms of reference presented at the first meeting should be approved by the Executive Boards of each organization. The Chief said that all of the earlier suggestions of the UNICEF Executive Board had been incorporated into the draft, which had been distributed to Board members.

441. WHO resolutions, UNICEF decisions and UNDP/UNFPA decisions related to improving the health status of women and children were also reviewed by the Coordinating Committee.

442. Three areas of interest and concern to each organization were considered in depth: safe motherhood; vitamin A; and adolescent health and development. For each of these areas, the secretariats had collaborated in advance in the preparation of joint position statements which were aimed at strengthening collaboration between WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA. The statements were reviewed and endorsed by CCH.

443. A number of Board members welcomed the expansion of CCH to include UNFPA. Another speaker enquired whether the World Bank should also become a member of CCH. The Chief responded that this had been discussed at the meeting and that the Bank had indicated that it would be interested in participating in specific meetings and on agenda items with which it had a particular concern. One speaker enquired about the role of CCH in the area of HIV/AIDS and whether the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) should participate in CCH. The Chief said that a representative of UNAIDS had participated in the last CCH meeting on relevant agenda items. It was suggested that at its next meeting, CCH should take up the issue of the need for a clearer delineation of the respective roles and responsibilities of each agency. (See the annex, decision 1998/20, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

J. Programme of work for 1999

444. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced this agenda item. She provided a brief summary of the basic principles established during recent years that guided the formulation of the programme of work (E/ICEF/1998/16 and Corr.1). In addition, the Executive Director said that although a joint session with the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had not been specifically included in the draft programme of work for 1999, the secretariat was interested in arranging a joint session if the two Boards decided that it would be useful. In fact, the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP) had indicated that it would like to participate in a joint session on issues of mutual interest. In drafting the work plan for 1999, the secretariat had built in the flexibility to allow for a joint session at any of its meetings around an issue to be identified by the Boards.

445. A delegation welcomed the opportunity to have another joint session, and suggested that the Bureaux of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards meet as soon as possible to discuss the issue. He also suggested that the WFP Board participate in planning the session, probably via conference call, and that the WFP Board be represented at the joint session by its Bureau. (See the annex, decision 1998/19, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

K. Other matters

446. One delegation, speaking on behalf of a number of other delegations, made a statement concerning the content of the Executive Director's annual report to the Executive Board. The speaker said that in order to make the report more useful both to the secretariat and the Board, information should be presented within a framework that clearly linked the planning process to the reporting process. She said that the report should address the following questions: what the UNICEF work plan was for the reporting period; what the relevant aggregate or gross targets were for those particular activities; what their budgetary projections were; whether the specified goals or targets were achieved, and if not, what problems and challenges were encountered; what lessons were learned during the reporting period; and what added value came from UNICEF involvement with other United Nations agencies.

447. The speaker suggested that revised format could follow the type of approach being taken with the biennial support budget, which presented an integrated budgeting framework linking programme planning and budgeting through the CPMP. She added that the issue could be discussed during the informal meeting to be held on October to review the resource mobilization strategy.

L. Closing of the session

448. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its guidance on such issues as the MTP, the resource mobilization strategy and the country programming process. She paid tribute to Torild Skard, Regional Director for West and Central Africa, who would be leaving UNICEF at the end of the year to return to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

449. The President said that he came away from the session with two overall impressions. First, when the regional directors had made their presentations to the Board, he had been struck by the commitment and enthusiasm of UNICEF staff and by the capability and overall quality of UNICEF country offices. Secondly, regarding the proceedings of the Board itself, he said it was important that members maintained an absolute minimum of "north-south" tension in their deliberations. The UNICEF Executive Board had a reputation as being remarkably businesslike, which was very valuable to the Board and to UNICEF as an organization, and made the Board's value to UNICEF more substantial. He said this was a "fragile thing" and that members needed to treat each other with care, thought and sensitivity in the future.

Annex

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD DURING 1998

Number	Title
	First regular session
1998/1.	Annual report to the Economic and Social Council
1998/2.	Biennial support budget for 1998-1999
1998/3.	General resources programme budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium
1998/4.	Supplementary-funded programme budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium
1998/5.	Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for 1998
1998/6.	Resource mobilization strategy
1998/7.	1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award
	Annual session
1998/8.	Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF
1998/9.	UNICEF communication policy
1998/10.	Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development
1998/11.	Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF
1998/12.	Eradication of poliomyelitis
1998/13.	Follow-up to the World Summit for Children
	Second regular session
1998/14.	Draft resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF
1998/15.	Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation
1998/16.	Review of the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations
1998/17.	Report on internal audit activities
1998/18.	Greeting Card and related Operations financial reports and statements

Annex (continued)

Number	Title
1998/19.	Programme of work for 1999
1998/20.	Report on the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health
1998/21.	Review of the recovery policy of UNICEF
1998/22.	Medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

First regular session

1998/1. Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the "Report of the Executive Director: Annual report to the Economic and Social Council" (E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I)), and requests the secretariat to transmit it, along with a summary of the comments made during the discussion, to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its 1998 substantive session;

2. Requests the Executive Director to include and identify, in future reports, issues which would require particular consideration of the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council.

First regular session
27 January 1998

1998/2. Biennial support budget for 1998-1999

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the 1998-1999 biennial support budget estimates of UNICEF, as contained in document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.1 and Corr.1, as well as of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.2) and the comments made by delegations during the consideration of the biennial support budget;

2. Underlines the importance of the integrated budgeting approach, linking country programme planning and budgeting, through the preparation of the country programme management plan, and welcomes in this context the progress shown by document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.4;

3. Welcomes the new format for the presentation of the budget in line with decisions 1997/3 and 1997/5 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1) on integrated budgeting and on harmonisation of budget presentations with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), respectively;

4. Requests the Executive Director to review with the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA the harmonised presentation with a view to improving it, particularly its clarity, for the next biennium, taking into account comments made by ACABQ and also by delegations during the Executive Board's discussion;

5. Requests the Executive Director to ensure that the current ratio of management and administration costs and programme support costs to programme resources will be contained; and to report to the Executive Board at its first regular session in 1999 on progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998-1999, taking into account the review of the medium-term plan, the levels of general resources, costs and income, the effect of currency fluctuations and implications for human resources; and to make any necessary recommendations to be implemented;

6. Approves gross appropriations in the amount of $527,495,900 for the purposes indicated below and resolves that the income estimates of $48,580,000

shall be used to offset the gross appropriations, resulting in estimated net appropriations of $478,915,900:

Biennial support budget for 1998-1999

	(In thousands of United States dollars)
Programme support:	
Country and regional offices	270 345.2
Headquarters	82 445.1
Subtotal	352 790.3
Management and administration of the organization	174 705.6
Total gross appropriations	527 495.9
Less: Estimated income to the budget	48 580.0
Estimated net appropriations	478 915.9

7. **Authorizes** the Executive Director to redeploy resources between appropriation lines up to a maximum of 5 per cent of the appropriation to which the resources are redeployed.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/3. General resources programme budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium

The Executive Board

Decides:

(a) That a general resources programme budget of $17,587,000 is approved (other than the Emergency Programme Fund) for 1998-1999 broken down as follows:

	(In thousands of United States dollars)
Headquarters	
Health	1 689
Nutrition	1 461
Education	1 308
Water and sanitation	790
Child protection	205
Intersectoral	1 469
Advocacy and communication	2 992
Planning, evaluation and monitoring	2 229
Emergency	1 395
Subtotal	13 538

Regions	**(In thousands of United States dollars)**
West and Central Africa	**989**
Eastern and Southern Africa	**260**
The Americas and the Caribbean	**745**
East Asia and the Pacific	**644**
South Asia	**651**
Middle East and North Africa	**760**
Subtotal	**4 049**
Total	**17 587**

(b) That the budget for the Emergency Programme Fund for 1998-1999 is approved as follows:

Non-reimbursable portion of the Fund	**5 000**
Revolving portion of the Fund	**20 000**
Total	**25 000**

(c) That the Executive Director be authorised to administer the funds in the most efficient and effective manner under the provision of each of the funds. The Executive Director, may, without further authorization from the Executive Board, transfer, if necessary, between the programme fields an amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the approved budget of the fund to which the transfer is being made.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/4. Supplementary-funded programme budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium

The Executive Board

Decides:

(a) That a supplementary-funded programme budget of $161,200,000 is approved for the 1998-1999 biennium, subject to availability of specific-purpose contributions, as follows:

	Headquarters	Region	Country	Total
	(In thousands of United States dollars)			
Regional offices				
West and Central Africa	-	2 000	-	2 000
Eastern and Southern Africa	-	7 900	-	7 900
The Americas and the Caribbean	-	2 000	-	2 000
Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC)	-	7 000	-	7 000
East Asia and the Pacific	-	2 000	-	2 000
South Asia	-	3 200	-	3 200
Middle East and North Africa	-	2 000	-	2 000
Subtotal	-	26 100	-	26 100

	Headquarters	Region	Country	Total
	(In thousands of United States dollars)			
Health	1 200	-	76 400	77 600
Nutrition	8 500	-	3 700	12 200
Education	2 400	-	2 000	4 400
Water and sanitation	400	-	3 000	3 400
Child protection	2 500	-	2 900	5 400
Intersectoral	5 800	-	3 400	9 200
Advocacy and communication	1 200	-	-	1 200
Emergency	6 700	-	-	6 700
Accelerated information technology and Programme Manager System (PROMS)	11 000	1 000	3 000	15 000
Subtotal	39 700	1 000	94 400	135 100
Total	39 700	27 100	94 400	161 200

(b) That for the biennium 1998-1999, a total recommendation of $161,200,000 for supplementary funding is approved. If necessary, funds in excess of indicated amounts for specific programme areas and regions can be received provided that the total amount of funds received is within the approved limit.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/5. Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for 1998

A. Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) budgeted expenditures for the 1998 season

The Executive Board

1. Approves for the fiscal year 1 January to 31 December 1998 budgeted expenditures of $93.6 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of table 8 to document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Director's Office	0.7
Marketing	67.3
Operations and Finance	14.3
Subtotal	82.3

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Non-operating expenses:	
Market Development Programme (MDP)	2.8
Fund-raising Development Programme (FDP)	7.8
GCO share in UNICEF administrative costs	0.6
Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme	0.1
Subtotal	11.3
Total expenditures, consolidated a/	93.6

2. Authorizes the Executive Director:

(a) To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of table 8 to document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3 and to increase the expenditures up to the level indicated in column III to table 8 of the same document, should the apparent net proceeds from product sales and/or private sector fund-raising increase to the levels indicated in column III, and, accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above) up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 1998 approved work plan;

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a/ For details, see table 2.

3. Requests GCO, in future budget submissions, to provide an analysis of the profitability of its two revenue-generating activities, i.e. product sales and private sector fund-raising, and a comparison of approved budget to actual expenditures for the second previous fiscal year.

B. Budgeted income for the 1998 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the period 1 January to 31 December 1998, GCO net proceeds are budgeted at $273.5 million (general resources) as shown in column II of table 8 to document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. Approves the changes in posts with a net decrease of 17 posts as indicated in annexes III and V to document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3;

2. Renews MDP with $2.8 million established for 1998;

3. Renews FDP with $7.8 million established for 1998;

4. Renews the Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme, which includes 10 countries, with a budget of $0.1 million established for 1998;

5. Authorizes the Executive Director to incur expenditures in the 1998 fiscal period related to the cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 1999 fiscal year up to $46.2 million as indicated in the GCO medium-term plan (see table 7 of document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.3/Corr.1).

D. Medium-term plan

The Executive Board

Approves the medium-term plan.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/6. Resource mobilization strategy

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms its commitment to taking decisions on its own funding arrangements in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/59 of 24 July 1997;

2. Welcomes the steps taken by the Executive Director to formulate a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF and her oral report on the preparatory work on this strategy, made to the Executive Board at its first regular session in 1998;

3. Stresses, in accordance with the resolutions mentioned above, the importance of the involvement of the Board in the work on the strategy;

4. Decides to hold at least one inter-sessional meeting, open to all members and observers of the United Nations, in the first quarter of 1998 to discuss a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF, based on a conference room paper prepared and circulated by the secretariat before the first inter-sessional meeting, taking fully into account discussions in other forums, and with input and participation as appropriate from the National Committees for UNICEF;

5. Requests the Executive Director to produce for discussion at the annual session of the Executive Board a report on the work of the secretariat and the Board on a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF;

6. Decides to transmit to the Economic and Social Council, attached to the 1998 report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council, the above-mentioned report along with the comments of the Board at its annual session;

7. Requests the Executive Director to produce a draft resource mobilization strategy for discussion at the second regular session of the Executive Board in 1998 with a view to adopting the strategy at the first regular session of the Board in 1999.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/7. 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

The Executive Board

1. Decides to present the 1998 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award to the Pacific Regional Human Rights Education Resource Team;

2. Approves an allocation of $25,000 from general resources for that purpose.

First regular session
30 January 1998

1998/8. Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Report on the work of the UNICEF Executive Board and secretariat on a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1998/11) and of the comments made during the discussion, and requests the secretariat to take the comments into account in preparing the draft resource mobilization strategy for the second regular session in September 1998.

Annual session
2 June 1998

1998/9. UNICEF communication policy

The Executive Board

1. Endorses document E/ICEF/1998/10 on the UNICEF communication strategy as a broad policy framework for UNICEF communication activities, including the continuing efforts of UNICEF to improve research and evaluation capacities and the communication functions for country, regional and headquarters levels;

2. Supports the approach outlined in the policy, which defines UNICEF communication functions as including information, advocacy, behavioural development and change, and social and resource mobilization;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to intensify UNICEF efforts to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with relevant sectors of the communication field.

Annual session
2 June 1998

1998/10. Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report on "Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development" (E/ICEF/1998/9) and of the comments made during the discussion of the report.

Annual session
3 June 1998

1998/11. Implementation of management excellence in UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. Notes with appreciation the report on the experience and results of the efforts under the Management Excellence Programme during the last three years (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.5);

2. Expresses its appreciation for the changes effected in UNICEF's structure, systems, processes and culture, results achieved and tools developed during this period, and encourages the Executive Director to continue strengthening and deepening the implementation of management excellence throughout the organization and at all levels;

3. Endorses the recommendation of the Executive Director that management excellence now be considered "mainstreamed" and that subsequent reporting on performance be included under the relevant agenda items, with special attention to identifying aspects of accountability, particularly elements of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, in the delivery of agreed programme objectives.

Annual session
5 June 1998

1998/12. Eradication of poliomyelitis

The Executive Board

1. Notes with appreciation the report on UNICEF "1998-2000 Programme Priorities" which gives priority to health issues, including malaria, HIV/AIDS, hygiene and sanitation, salt iodization, vitamin A supplementation, measles, polio and immunization;

2. Expresses its appreciation for the progress which has been made towards the World Summit for Children goal of polio eradication by Governments, UNICEF and their international partners. Polio eradication is clearly an achievable goal, and UNICEF has a comparative advantage. However, polio is still endemic in many parts of the world;

3. Expresses its concern at the gaps in funding and programming which create barriers to polio's successful eradication by the year 2000. Achievement of this goal will make resources, previously devoted to polio, available for present challenges and for those in the twenty-first century, such as malaria;

4. Endorses UNICEF polio eradication efforts working in a coordinated fashion with the World Health Organization, Governments, non-governmental organizations (e.g. Rotary International) and civil society. Polio eradication should be accomplished in such a way as to build capacity in developing health systems. We reaffirm our goal of polio eradication by the year 2000.

Annual session
5 June 1998

1998/13. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

The Executive Board

1. Notes with satisfaction the overall progress being made in the implementation of the Declaration of the World Summit for Children and its contribution to the realization of children's rights;

2. Recognizes that efficient measures need to be taken to reach the goals for the year 2000 established by the Summit;

3. Supports the priority actions identified by the secretariat to accelerate progress towards achieving the Summit goals by the year 2000 as well as the process developed to measure progress;

4. Requests the Executive Director to support the Secretary-General in the preparation of his report to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly on the preparation of the Assembly's special session in 2001 to review achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children;

5. Further requests the Executive Director to report on the implementation of the present decision to the Executive Board at its annual session in 1999;

6. Recommends that the Economic and Social Council take appropriate actions to highlight the need to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children.

Annual session
5 June 1998

Second regular session

1998/14. Draft resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Draft resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1998/14) and the comments made during the discussion, and requests that these be taken into account by the secretariat in preparing the final resource mobilization strategy to be presented to the Board in January 1999.

Second regular session
9 September 1998

1998/15. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

The Executive Board

1. Approves the following recommendations of the Executive Director for programme cooperation as summarized in document E/ICEF/1998/P/L.21:

(a) $88,619,753 for general resources funding and $189,324,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Africa, as follows:

Country	*Period*	*General resources*	*Supplementary funds*	*Document E/ICEF/1998/...*
Angola	1999-2003	18 729 000	56 471 000	P/L.8/Add.1
Benin	1999-2003	5 913 000	12 500 000	P/L.11/Add.1
Congo	1999-2000	1 690 000	5 000 000	P/L.25
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1998-1999	2 502 000		P/L.26
Equatorial Guinea	1999-2003	3 378 000	2 950 000	P/L.12/Add.1
Gambia	1999-2003	3 594 000	5 000 000	P/L.13/Add.1
Kenya	1999-2003	16 785 000	15 000 000	P/L.10/Add.1
Liberia	1999-2000	2 046 000	16 000 000	P/L.27
Mauritania	1999-2003 1998	5 136 000 338 753	12 500 000	P/L.14/Add.1
Mozambique	1999-2001	18 238 000	29 762 000	P/L.23
Niger	1998-1999	4 411 000		P/L.28
Somalia	1999-2000	5 859 000	34 141 000	P/L.24

(b) $4,639,000 for general resources funding and $16,500,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in the Americas and the Caribbean, as follows:

Country	*Period*	*General resources*	*Supplementary funds*	*Document E/ICEF/1998/...*
Colombia	1999	840 000	2 000 000	P/L.29
Ecuador	1999-2003	3 799 000	14 500 000	P/L.15/Add.1

(c) $197,678,000 for general resources funding and $265,500,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Asia, as follows:

Country	*Period*	*General resources*	*Supplementary funds*	*Document E/ICEF/1998/...*
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1999-2000	1 677 000	3 000 000	P/L.30
India	1999-2002	120 042 000	180 000 000	P/L.31
Maldives	1999-2002	2 552 000	1 000 000	P/L.18/Add.1
Pakistan	1999-2003	56 943 000	35 000 000	P/L.19/Add.1
Philippines	1999-2003	12 499 000	34 000 000	P/L.16/Add.1
Thailand	1999-2003	3 965 000	12 500 000	P/L.17/Add.1

(d) $4,188,000 for general resources funding and $30,691,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1998/...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1999-2001	2 335 000	17 010 000	P/L.35
Croatia	1999-2000		2 193 000	P/L.36
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	1999-2001		7 541 000	P/L.37
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1999-2001	1 853 000	3 947 000	P/L.38

(e) $14,610,413 for general resources funding and $71,507,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa, as follow:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1998/...
Djibouti	1999-2003	3 304 000	3 750 000	P/L.20/Add.1
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1998-1999	419 000		P/L.34
Iraq	1999-2000	2 943 000	22 057 000	P/L.32
	1998	83 413		
Yemen	1999-2001	7 861 000	45 700 000	P/L.33

Second regular session
9 and 10 September 1998

1998/16. Review of the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations

The Executive Board

Having reviewed the report on the consideration and approval process of country programme recommendations (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.22), and bearing in mind the possible implications of the assessment of the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework on this process,

Requests the secretariat to inform the Executive Board, no later than the second regular session in 1999, if any changes to the approval process are required as a result of the findings of the above-mentioned assessment.

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/17. Report on internal audit activities

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report on "Internal audit activities in 1997" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.7).

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/18. Greeting Card and related Operations financial reports and statements

The Executive Board

Takes note of the Greeting Card and related Operations financial reports and statements for the year ended 30 April 1997 and for the eight-month period ended 31 December 1997 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.10 and E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.11, respectively).

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/19. Programme of work for 1999

The Executive Board

Adopts the following dates and programme of work for 1999:

First regular session
(19-22 January) 1/

Report of the Executive Director (Part in): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council (1995/5)

Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF (1998/6)

Private Sector Division (PSD) work plan and proposed budget for 1999

Country notes (1995/8)

Summary of midterm reviews and major evaluations of country programmes (1995/8)

Report on progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 19981999 (1998/2)

Financial matters: 2/

1/ Eid Al-Fitr will be observed as an official holiday on 18 January as per General Assembly resolution 51/211, therefore no meetings can be held.

2/ Deferred from the second regular session in September 1998.

(a) UNICEF financial report and statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1997 and report of the Board of Auditors

(b) Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administration and Budgetary Questions

1999 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

Annual session
(7-11 June)

Report of the Executive Director (Part II)

Goals and strategies for children beyond the year 2000

Follow-up to the World Summit for Children (1992/5), including implementation of decision 1998/13

Programming with a child rights perspective: the challenges

Ensuring child survival, development and protection in Africa, including United Nations System-wide Initiative for Africa (1995/18)

Progress report on mainstreaming gender

Progress and challenges in achieving universal basic education

Oral report on progress made in the implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF (1997/9)

Progress report on the UNICEF strategy and investments in information technology (E/ICEF/1998/6 (Part in), para. 66), including report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report on the seventh meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education, including the President's report on the meeting (1995/4)

Report on field visits of Executive Board members (1992/32)

Second regular session
(7-10 September)

Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council (1995/38 and E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1, para. 470)

Financial medium-term plan for the period 1999-2002 (1990/1)

Biennial support budget for 2000-2001

Country programme recommendations (1995/8)

International Child Development Centre

Revision of Financial Regulations and Rules, including report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Financial matters:

(a) UNICEF interim financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 1998, the first year of the biennium 1998-1999

(b) PSD financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 1998

Report of internal audit activities

Programme of work for 2000

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/20. Report on the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report on the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH) held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 3 and 4 July 1998 and its recommendations (E/ICEF/1998/15), and endorses the terms of reference for CCH as described in the report.

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/21. Review of the recovery policy of UNICEF

The Executive Board

Decides that:

(a) As implemented in the 1998-1999 biennial support budget, there will be one gross support budget to cover the costs of programme support and management and administration for general resources and supplementary funding;

(b) As an interim measure, to cover the support costs to be incurred in the 1999 support budget, the recovery rate will be increased from 3 to 5 per cent, while recognizing that the indirect support costs incurred in field offices and headquarters for supplementary funding exceed this rate. This rate will be applied to all new agreements to be signed after the second regular session of the Executive Board in 1998;

(c) The interest earned on the supplementary funding cash balances will, in accordance with existing financial rules and regulations, continue to be an item in the miscellaneous income in general resources, and will be used, as an interim measure, to cover the shortfall in the recovery;

(d) All supplementary-funded programmes shall include a separate budget line for "indirect programme support costs" equivalent to the actual recovery rate approved; this line item shall be additional to such direct costs as project staff costs and related travel and computer equipment, which will continue to be included in the specific programme budget. The recovery rate will be applied to actual supplementary-funded programme expenditure for a given budget year;

(e) In the case of extra requirements for expertise, research or reporting from donors, additional charges will be negotiated, on a case-by-case basis, to cover the additional costs to set up separate capacity systems and procedures;

(f) In cases where an influx of large supplementary funds exceeding the planned throughput necessitates additional programme support functions to be established, as described in paragraph 37 of document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.6, part of the recovery will be released to field offices or Supply Division for establishing additional programme support costs for supplementary-funded programmes;

(g) The secretariat undertake a full analysis of recovery policy, including the methodology of calculating and applying charges, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.12), and taking into account concerns raised at the Board including private sector fund-raising in programme countries, and to reflect this in the preparation of the support budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Second regular session
10 September 1998

1998/22. Medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the medium-term plan as a framework for UNICEF action covering the period 1998-2001 as contained in document E/ICEF/1998/13 and Corr.1;

2. Notes the inclusion in the plan of funding targets and its emphasis on strengthening performance management, and in this context, welcomes the Executive Director's endeavour to refine the performance management system and to report specifically on the steps taken to this end in her annual report in 1999;

3. Approves the priorities for actions set forth in the plan, with special emphasis on the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children and on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

4. *Supports* the rights-based approach, as reflected in the medium-term plan, and *welcomes* the Executive Director's intention to further elaborate on it;

5. *Approves* the medium-term plan as a framework of projections for 1998-2001 (summarized in table 5 of document E/ICEF/1998/13), including the preparation of up to $254 million in programme expenditures from general resources to be submitted to the Executive Board in 1999 (shown in table 4, item 3, of document E/ICEF/1998/13). The amount is subject to the availability of resources and to the condition that estimates of income and expenditure made in this plan continue to be valid;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to report on the funding targets necessary to achieve the goals of the medium-term plan in the context of the resource mobilization strategy to be adopted by the Board in January 1999;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to assess progress towards the priorities outlined in the plan, bearing in mind paragraph 3 of the present decision, in her annual report to the Executive Board.

Second regular session
11 September 1998